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SCIENCE AND CULTURE

*A Selection of Passages from the Writings of
Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*

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NOTE

Science is the greatest achievement of the modern age and also its acutest problem. Sri Aurobindo always recognised that Science was a permanent contribution to Human Culture. He, however, insisted that it needed to be properly re-synthesised in our life. And to this end he devoted a good deal of his energies. In fact, this issue was intimately connected with his primary undertaking, which was the discovery of the fundamentals of life and existence and of the true methods which could lead to the fulfilment and perfection of man and his culture.

Here in this book we have collected together and arranged a number of selected passages on the nature and character of modern Science, its values and limitations and the synthesis needed today of science and culture. Sri Aurobindo had also definite positions on the most of the important issues of science. Some passages are directly of this character.

The last section contains a few of the talks the Mother gave to the Ashramites at different occasions and some other passages and aphoristic words of her. All these throw light on the nature of Science and Culture and the issue of their essential relation.

SOURCES

1. The Life Divine
2. The Synthesis of Yoga (The "*Arya*" File)
3. A Defence of Indian Culture (The "*Arya*" File)
4. The Renaissance in India
5. Ideals and Progress
6. The Human Cycle
7. Collected Poems and Plays
8. Letters of Sri Aurobindo (Vol. IV)
9. Prayers and Meditations of the Mother
10. Words of the Mother (1st Series)
11. Words of the Mother (3rd Series)
12. Prières Annuelles

CONTENTS

I. SCIENCE AND CULTURE

	<i>Page</i>
1. A VISION OF SCIENCE	1
2. THE GOVERNMENT OF LIFE BY SCIENCE ...	4
3. MATTER, MIND AND SPIRIT	6
4. INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE	9
5. SCIENCE AND CULTURE	14
6. BARBARISM, CIVILISATION AND CULTURE ...	15

II. A FEW ISSUES OF SCIENCE

1. THE LAW OF CONTRADICTION AND THE METHOD OF ANALYSIS	19
2. THE INITIAL ERROR OF OUR ANALYTICAL MENTALITY	23
3. THE NATURE AND COURSE OF EVOLUTION ...	24
4. THE SCALE OF NATURE	29
5. GENIUS	32
6. WHAT IS 'LIFE'?	33
7. SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION	38
8. SPACE, TIME AND THE SPIRIT	42
9. PSYCHOLOGY	46
10. OCCULTISM	48
11. SCIENCE AND SOCIOLOGICAL IDEALS	52
12. WHAT IS YOGA?	60
13. OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL EXISTENCE	61
14. RELIGION, THE SCIENCE OF THE INFINITE ...	63
15. EVOLUTION OF RELIGION	65
16. ANCIENT INDIAN SCIENCE	68
17. THE THREE ESSENTIAL MODES OF NATURE ...	71

CONTENTS

III. THE SYNTHESIS NEEDED

	<i>Page</i>
1. PHYSICAL SCIENCE AND HUMAN HAPPINESS AND PERFECTION	75
2. EXTROVERSION, INTROVERSION AND SPIRITUAL INNER LIVING	81
3. NATURE AND SUPERNATURE	82
4. EVOLUTIONARY CRISIS IN THE LIFE OF MANKIND	85
5. ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS	87
6. INTELLECT AND REASON IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE SPIRIT	92
7. "SCIENTIFICALLY SPEAKING"	94
8. THE HIGHER AND THE LOWER KNOWLEDGE ...	96
9. THE MOST VITAL ISSUE OF THE AGE ...	97
10. THE INDIAN SPIRIT	99
11. THE SPIRITUAL AND THE MATERIAL-MENTAL VIEWPOINTS	100
12. EUROPE AND INDIA	103

IV. WORDS OF THE MOTHER

1. A 'PRAYER AND MEDITATION'	105
2. THE ORDINARY LIFE AND THE TRUE SOUL ...	106
3. STEPPING BACK	109
4. KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCIENTIST AND THE YOGI	110
5. DIFFERENT KINDS OF SPACE AND TIME— FEARLESSNESS ON THE VITAL PLANE	112
6. THE ATOMIC BOMB	114
7. APHORISTIC WORDS	115

I

SCIENCE AND CULTURE

A VISION OF SCIENCE

I DREAMED that in myself the world I saw,
Wherein three Angels strove for mastery. Law
Was one, clear vision and denial cold,
Yet in her limits strong, presumptuous, bold;
The second with enthusiasm bright,
Flame in her heart but round her brows the night,
Faded as this advanced. She could not bear
That searching gaze, nor the strong chilling air
These thoughts created, nourishing our parts
Of mind, but petrifying human hearts.
Science was one, the other gave her name,
Religion. But a third behind them came,
Veiled, vague, remote, and had as yet no right
Upon the world, but lived in her own light.
Wide were the victories of the Angel proud
Who conquered now and in her praise were loud
The nations. Few even yet to the other clove,—
And some were souls of night and some were souls of love.
But this was confident and throned. Her heralds ranged
Claiming that night was dead and all things changed;
For all things opened, all seemed clear, seemed bright—
Save the vast ranges that they left in night.
However, the light they shed upon the earth

Was great indeed, a firm and mighty birth.
A century's progress lived before my eyes.
Delivered from amazement and surprise,
Man's spirit measuring his worlds around
The laws of sight divined and laws of sound.
Light was not hidden from its searching gaze,
Nor matter could deny her myriad maze
To the cold enquiry; for the far came near,
The small loomed large, the intricate grew clear.
Measuring and probing the strong Angel strode,
Dissolving and combining, till she trod
Firmly among the stars, could weigh their forms,
Foretold the earthquakes, analysed the storms.
Doubt seemed to end and wonder's reign was closed.
The stony pages of the earth disclosed
Their unremembered secrets. Horses of steam
Were bitted and the lightnings made a team
To draw our chariots. Heaven was scaled at last
And the loud seas subdued. Distance resigned
Its strong obstructions to the mastering mind.
So moved that spirit trampling; then it laid
Its hand at last upon itself, how this was made
Wondering, and sought to class and sought to trace
Mind by its forms, the wearer by the dress.
Then the other arose and met that spirit robust,
Who laboured; she now grew a shade who must
Fade wholly away, yet to her fellow cried,
"I pass, for thou hast laboured well and wide.
Thou thinkest term and end for thee are not;
But though thy pride is great, thou hast forgot
The Sphinx that waits for man beside the way.
All questions thou mayst answer, but one day

Her question shall await thee. That reply,
As all we must; for they, who cannot, die.
She slays them and their mangled bodies lie
Upon the highways of eternity.
Therefore, if thou wouldst live, know first this thing,
Who thou art in this dungeon labouring.”
And Science confidently, “Nothing am I but earth,
Tissue and nerve and from the seed a birth,
A mould, a plasm, a gas, a little that is much.
In these grey cells that quiver to each touch
The secret lies of man; they are the thing called I.
Matter insists and matter makes reply.
Shakespeare was this; this force in Jesus yearned
And conquered by the cross; this only learned
The secret of the suns that blaze afar;
This was Napoleon’s giant mind of war.”
I heard and marvelled in myself to see
The infinite deny infinity.
Yet the weird paradox seemed justified;
Even mysticism shrank out-mystified.
But the third Angel came and touched my eyes;
I saw the mornings of the future rise,
I heard the voices of an age unborn
That comes behind us and our pallid morn,
And from the heart of an approaching light
One said to man, “Know thyself infinite,
Who shalt do mightier miracles than these,
Infinite, moving mid infinities.”
Then from our hills the ancient answer pealed,
“For Thou, O Splendour, art myself concealed,
And the grey cell contains me not, the star
I outmeasure and am older than the elements are.

Whether on earth or far beyond the sun,
I, stumbling, clouded, am the Eternal One.”¹

THE GOVERNMENT OF LIFE BY SCIENCE

Our nature is complex and we have to find a key to some perfect unity and fullness of its complexity. Its first evolutionary basis is the material life: Nature began with that and man also has to begin with it; he has first to affirm his material and vital existence. But if he stops there, there can be for him no evolution; his next and greater preoccupation must be to find himself as a mental being in a material life—both individual and social—as perfected as possible. This was the direction which the Hellenic idea gave to European civilisation, and the Roman reinforced—or weakened—it with the ideal of organised power: the cult of reason, the interpretation of life by an intellectual thought critical utilitarian, organising and constructive, the government of life by Science are the last outcome of this inspiration. But in ancient times the higher creative and dynamic element was the pursuit of an ideal truth, good and beauty and the moulding of mind, life and body into perfection and harmony by this ideal. Beyond and above this preoccupation, as soon as mind is sufficiently developed, there awakes in man the spiritual preoccupation, the discovery of a self and inmost truth of being and the release of man’s mind and life into the truth of the Spirit, its perfection by the power of the Spirit, the

¹ Written in the 90’s of the last century. It saw the “mornings of the future” beyond the obtaining materialism of Science. That materialism has now really ceased to exist and a new prospect has opened before Science.

solidarity, unity, mutuality of all beings in the Spirit. This was the Eastern ideal carried by Buddhism and other ancient disciplines to the coasts of Asia and Egypt and from there poured by Christianity into Europe. But these motives, burning for a time like dim torch-lights in the confusion and darkness created by the barbaric flood that had submerged the old civilisations, have been abandoned by the modern spirit which has found another light, the light of Science. What the modern spirit has sought for is the economic social ultimate,—an ideal material organisation of civilisation and comfort, the use of reason and science and education for the generalisation of a utilitarian rationality which will make the individual a perfected social being in a perfected economic society. What remained from the spiritual ideas was—for a time—a mentalised and moralised humanitarianism relieved of all religious colouring and a social ethicism which was deemed all-sufficient to take the place of a religious and individual ethic. It was so far that the race had reached when it found itself hurried forward by its own momentum into a subjective chaos and a chaos of its life in which all received values were overthrown and all firm ground seemed to disappear from its social organisation, its conduct and its culture.

For this ideal, this conscious stress on the material and economic life was in fact a civilised reversion to the first state of man, his early barbaric state and its preoccupation with life and matter, a spiritual retrogression with the resources of the mind of a developed humanity and a fully evolved Science at its disposal. As an element in the total complexity of human life this stress on a perfected economic and material existence has its place in the whole: as a sole or predominant stress it is for humanity itself, for the evolution itself full of danger. The first danger is a resurgence of the

old vital and material primitive barbarian in a civilised form; the means Science has put at our disposal eliminates the peril of the subversion and destruction of an effete civilisation by stronger primitive peoples, but it is the resurgence of the barbarian in ourselves, in civilised man, that is the peril, and this we see all around us. For that is bound to come if there is no high and strenuous mental and moral ideal controlling and uplifting the vital and physical man in us and no spiritual ideal liberating him from himself into his inner being. Even if this relapse is escaped, there is another danger,—for a cessation of the evolutionary urge, a crystallisation into a stable comfortable mechanised social living without ideal or outlook is another possible outcome. Reason by itself cannot long maintain the race in its progress; it can do so only if it is a mediator between the life and body and something higher and greater within him; for it is the inner spiritual necessity, the push from what is there yet unrealised within him that maintains in him, once he has attained to mind, the evolutionary stress, the spiritual *nisus*.

MATTER, MIND AND SPIRIT

Our cognitive consciousness is limited, ignorant, finite; our conceptions of reality depend on our way of contact with existence in this limited consciousness and may be very different from the way in which an original and ultimate Consciousness sees it. It is necessary to distinguish between the essential Reality, the phenomenal reality dependent upon it and arising out of it, and the restricted and often misleading experience or notion of either that is created by our sense-experience and our reason. To our sense the earth is flat and, for most immediate practical purposes, within a

limit, we have to follow the sense reality and deal with the flatness as if it were a fact; but in true phenomenal reality the flatness of the earth is unreal, and Science seeking for the truth of the phenomenal reality in things has to treat it as approximately round. In a host of details Science contradicts the evidence of the senses as to the real truth of phenomena; but, still, we have to accept the cadre provided by our senses because the practical relations with things which they impose on us have validity as an effect of reality and cannot be disregarded. Our reason, relying on the senses and exceeding them, constructs its own canons or notions of the real and unreal, but these canons vary according to the standpoint taken by the reasoning observer. The physical scientist probing into phenomena erects formulas and standards based on the objective and phenomenal reality and its processes: to his view mind may appear as a subjective result of Matter and self and spirit as unreal; at any rate he has to act as if matter and energy alone existed and mind were only an observer of an independent physical reality which is unaffected by any mental processes¹ or any presence or intervention of a cosmic Intelligence. The psychologist, probing independently into mind consciousness and mind unconsciousness, discovers another domain of realities, subjective in its character, which has its own law and process; to him Mind may even come to appear as the key of the real, Matter as only a field for mind, and spirit apart from mind as something unreal. But there is a farther probing which brings up the truth of self and spirit and establishes a greater order of the

¹ This position has been shaken by the theory of Relativity, but it must hold as a pragmatic basis for experiment and affirmation of the scientific fact.

real in which there is a reversal of our view both of the subjective mind realities and objective physical realities so that they are seen as things phenomenal, secondary, dependent upon the truth of self and the realities of the spirit. In this deeper search into things mind and matter begin to wear the appearance of a lesser order of the real and may easily come to appear unreal.

But it is the reason accustomed to deal with the finite that makes these exclusions; it cuts the whole into segments and can select one segment of the whole as if it were the entire reality. This is necessary for its action since its business is to deal with the finite as finite, and we have to accept for practical purposes and for the reason's dealings with the finite and cadre it gives us, because it is valid as an effect of reality and so cannot be disregarded. When we come to the experience of the spiritual which is itself the whole or contains the whole in itself, our mind carries there too its segmenting reason and the definitions necessary to a finite cognition; it cuts a line of section between the infinite and the finite, the spirit and its phenomena or manifestations, and dubs those as real and these as unreal. But an original and ultimate consciousness embracing all the terms of existence in single integral view would see the whole in its spiritual essential reality and the phenomenon as a phenomenon or manifestation of that reality. If this greater spiritual consciousness saw in things only unreality and an entire disconnection with the truth of the spirit, it could not have—if it were itself a Truth-consciousness—any reason for maintaining them in continuous or recurrent existence through all Time: if it so maintains them, it is because they are based on the realities of the spirit. But, necessarily, when thus integrally seen, the phenomenal reality would take on another

appearance than when it is viewed by the reason and sense of the finite being; it would have another and deeper reality, another and greater significance, another and more subtle and complex process of its movements of existence. The canons of reality and all the forms of thought created by the finite reason and sense would appear to the greater consciousness as partial constructions with an element of truth in them and an element of error; these constructions might therefore be described as at once real and unreal, but the phenomenal world itself would not become either unreal or unreal-real by that fact: it would put on another reality of a spiritual character; the finite would reveal itself as a power, a movement, a process of the Infinite.

INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE

To refuse to enquire upon any general ground preconceived and *a priori* is an obscurantism as prejudicial to the extension of knowledge as the religious obscurantism which opposed in Europe the extension of scientific discovery. The greatest inner discoveries, the experience of self-being, the cosmic consciousness, the inner calm of the liberated spirit, the direct effect of mind upon mind, the knowledge of things by consciousness in direct contact with other consciousness or with its objects, most spiritual experiences of any value, cannot be brought before the tribunal of the common mentality which has no experience of these things and takes its own absence or incapacity of experience as a proof of their invalidity or their non-existence. Physical truth or formulas, generalisations, discoveries founded upon physical observation can be so referred, but even there a training of capacity is needed before one can truly understand and judge; it is not

every untrained mind that can follow the mathematics of relativity or other difficult scientific truths or judge of the validity either of their results or their process. All reality, all experience must indeed, to be held as true, be capable of verification by a same or similar experience; so, in fact, all men can have a spiritual experience and can follow it out and verify it in themselves, but only when they have acquired the capacity or can follow the inner methods by which that experience and verification are made possible. It is necessary to dwell for a moment on these obvious and elementary truths because the opposite ideas have been sovereign in a recent period of human mentality,—they are now only receding,—and have stood in the way of the development of a vast domain of possible knowledge. It is of supreme importance for the human spirit to be free to sound the depths of inner or subliminal reality, of spiritual and of what is still superconscious reality, and not to immure itself in the physical mind and its narrow domain of objective external solidities; for in that way alone can there come liberation from the Ignorance in which our mentality dwells and a release into a complete consciousness, a true and integral self-realisation and self-knowledge.

An integral knowledge demands an exploration, an unveiling of all the possible domains of consciousness and experience. For there are subjective domains of our being which lie behind the obvious surface; these have to be fathomed and whatever is ascertained must be admitted within the scope of the total reality. An inner range of spiritual experience is one very great domain of human consciousness; it has to be entered into up to its deepest depths and its vastest reaches. The supraphysical is as real as the physical; to know it is part of a complete knowledge. The knowledge

of the supraphysical has been associated with mysticism and occultism, and occultism has been banned as a superstition and a fantastic error. But the occult is a part of existence; a true occultism means no more than a research into supraphysical realities and an unveiling of the hidden laws of being and Nature, of all that is not obvious on the surface. It attempts the discovery of the secret laws of mind and mental energy, the secret laws of life and life-energy, the secret laws of the subtle-physical and its energies,—all that Nature has not put into visible operation on the surface; it pursues also the application of these hidden truths and powers of Nature so as to extend the mastery of the human spirit beyond the ordinary operations of mind, the ordinary operations of life, the ordinary operations of our physical existence. In the spiritual domain, which is occult to the surface mind in so far as it passes beyond normal and enters into supernormal experience, there is possible not only the discovery of the self and spirit, but the discovery of the uplifting, informing and guiding light of spiritual consciousness and the power of the spirit, the spiritual way of knowledge, the spiritual way of action. To know these things and to bring their truths and forces into the life of humanity is a necessary part of its evolution. Science itself is in its own way an occultism, for it brings to light the formulas which Nature has hidden and it uses its knowledge to set free operations of her energies which she has not included in her ordinary operations and to organise and place at the service of man her occult powers and processes, a vast system of physical magic,—for there is and can be no other magic than the utilisation of secret truths of being, secret powers and processes of Nature. It may even be found that a supraphysical knowledge is necessary for the completion of physical knowledge,

because the processes of physical Nature have behind them a supraphysical factor, a power and action mental, vital or spiritual which is not tangible to any outer means of knowledge.

All insistence on the sole or the fundamental validity of the objective real takes its stand on the sense of the basic reality of Matter. But it is now evident that Matter is by no means fundamentally real; it is a structure of Energy: it is becoming even a little doubtful whether the acts and creations of this Energy itself are explicable except as the motions of power of a secret Mind or Consciousness of which its processes and steps of structure are the formulas. It is therefore no longer possible to take Matter as the sole reality. The material interpretation of existence was the result of an exclusive concentration, a preoccupation with one movement of Existence, and such an exclusive concentration has its utility and is therefore permissible; in recent times it has justified itself by the many immense and the innumerable minute discoveries of physical Science. But a solution of the whole problem of existence cannot be based on an exclusive one-sided knowledge; we must know not only what Matter is and what are its processes, but what mind and life are and what are their processes, and one must know also spirit and soul and all that is behind the material surface: only then can we have a knowledge sufficiently integral for a solution of the problem. For the same reason those views of existence which arise from an exclusive or predominant preoccupation with Mind or with Life and regard Mind or Life as the sole fundamental reality, have not a sufficiently wide basis for acceptance. Such a preoccupation of exclusive concentration may lead to a fruitful scrutiny which sheds much light on Mind and Life, but cannot result in a total solution of the problem. It may very well be that an exclusive or predomi-

nant concentration on the subliminal being, regarding the surface existence as a mere system of symbols for an expression of its sole reality, might throw a strong light on the subliminal and its processes and extend vastly the powers of the human being, but it would not be by itself an integral solution or lead us successfully to the integral knowledge of Reality. In our view the Spirit, the Self is the fundamental reality of existence; but an exclusive concentration on this fundamental reality to the exclusion of all reality of Mind, Life or Matter except as an imposition on the Self or unsubstantial shadows cast by the Spirit might help to an independent and radical spiritual realisation but not to an integral and valid solution of the truth of cosmic and individual existence.

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But integral knowledge can only come by an evolution of our being and our nature, and that would seem to signify a slow process in Time such as has accompanied the other evolutionary transformations. But as against that inference there is the fact that the evolution has now become conscious and its method and steps need not be altogether of the same character as when it was subconscious in its process. The integral knowledge, since it must result from a change of consciousness, can be gained by a process in which our will and endeavour have a part, in which they can discover and apply their own steps and method: its growth in us can proceed by a conscious self-transformation. It is necessary then to see what is likely to be the principle of this new process of evolution and what are the movements of the integral knowledge that must necessarily emerge in it,—or, in other words, what is the nature of the consciousness that must be the

base of the life divine and how that life may be expected to be formed or to form itself, to materialise or, as one might say, to "realise".

SCIENCE AND CULTURE

Science in its very nature is knowledge, is intellectuality, and its whole work has been that of the Mind turning its gaze upon its vital and physical frame and environment to know and conquer and dominate Life and Matter. The scientist is Man the thinker mastering the forces of material Nature by knowing them. Life and Matter are after all our standing-ground, our lower basis and to know their processes and their own proper possibilities and the opportunities they give to the human being is part of the knowledge necessary for transcending them. Life and the body have to be exceeded, but they have also to be utilised and perfected. Neither the laws nor the possibilities of physical Nature can be entirely known unless we know also the laws and possibilities of supraphysical Nature; therefore the development of new and the recovery of old mental and psychic sciences have to follow upon the perfection of our physical knowledge, and that new era is already beginning to open upon us. But the perfection of the physical sciences was a prior necessity and had to be the first field for the training of the mind of man in his new endeavour to know Nature and possess his world.

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But if Science has thus prepared us for an age of wider and deeper culture and if in spite of and even partly by its materialism it has rendered impossible the return of the true material-

ism, that of the barbarian mentality, it has encouraged more or less indirectly both by its attitude to life and its discoveries another kind of barbarism,—for it can be called by no other name,—that of the industrial, the commercial, the economic age which is now progressing to its culmination and its close. This economic barbarism is essentially that of the vital man who mistakes the vital being for the self and accepts its satisfaction as the first aim of life. The characteristic of Life is desire and the instinct of possession. Just as the physical barbarian makes the excellence of the body and the development of physical force, health and prowess his standard and aim, so the vitalistic or economic barbarian makes the satisfaction of wants and desires and the accumulation of possessions his standard and aim. His ideal man is not the cultured or noble or thoughtful or moral or religious, but the successful man.

BARBARISM, CIVILISATION AND CULTURE

Barbarism is the state of society in which man is almost entirely preoccupied with his life and body, his economic and physical existence,—at first with their sufficient maintenance, not as yet their greater or richer well-being,—and has few means and little inclination to develop his mentality, while civilisation is the more evolved state of society in which to a sufficient social and economic organisation is added the activity of the mental life in most if not all of its parts.

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But in a civilised society there is still the distinction between the partially, crudely, conventionally civilised and the cul-

tured. It would seem therefore that the mere participation in the ordinary benefits of civilisation is not enough to raise a man into the mental life proper; a farther development, a higher elevation is needed. The last generation drew emphatically the distinction between the cultured man and the Philistine and got a fairly clear idea of what was meant by it. Roughly, the Philistine was for them the man who lives outwardly the civilised life, possesses all its paraphernalia, has and mouths the current stock of opinions, prejudices, conventions, sentiments, but is impervious to ideas, exercises no free intelligence, is innocent of beauty and art, vulgarises everything that he touches, religion, ethics, literature, life.

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In the range of the mind's life itself, to live in its merely practical and dynamic activity or in the mentalised emotional or sensational current, a life of conventional conduct, average feelings, customary ideas, opinions and prejudices which are not one's own but those of the environment, to have no free and open play of mind, but to live grossly and unthinkingly by the unintelligent rule of the many, to live besides according to the senses and sensations controlled by certain conventions, but neither purified nor enlightened nor chastened by any law of beauty — all this is contrary to the ideal of culture.

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Not to live principally in the activities of the sense-mind, but in the activities of knowledge and reason and a wide intellectual curiosity, the activities of the cultivated aesthetic being, the activities of the enlightened will which make for

character and high ethical ideals and a large human action, not to be governed by our lower or our average mentality but by truth and beauty and the self-ruling will is the ideal of a true culture and the beginning of an accomplished humanity.

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The mind and the intellect are, however, not the key-power of our existence. For they can only trace out a round of half-truths and uncertainties and revolve in that unsatisfying circle. But concealed in the mind and life, in all the action of the intellectual, the aesthetic, the ethical, the dynamic and practical, the emotional, sensational, vital and physical being, there is a power that sees by identity and intuition and gives to all these things such truth and such certainty and stability as they are able to compass. Obscurely we are now beginning to see something of this behind all our science and philosophy and all our other activities. But so long as this power has to work for the mind and life and not for itself, to work in their forms and not by its own spontaneous light, we cannot make any great use of this discovery, cannot get the native benefit of this inner Daemon. Man's road to spiritual supermanhood will be open when he declares boldly that all he has yet developed, including the intellect of which he is so rightly and yet so vainly proud, are now no longer sufficient for him, and that to uncase, discover, set free this greater Light within shall be henceforward his pervading preoccupation. Then will his philosophy, art, science, ethics, social existence, vital pursuits be no longer an exercise of mind and life, done for themselves, carried in a circle, but a means for the discovery of a greater Truth behind mind and life and for the bringing of its power into our human existence. We shall be on the

right road to become ourselves, to find our true law of perfection, to live our true, satisfied existence in our real being and divine nature.

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A purely intellectual, ethical and aesthetic culture which does not go back to the inmost truth of the spirit, is still an Ignorance, a relative and superficial knowledge.

II

A FEW ISSUES OF SCIENCE

THE LAW OF CONTRADICTION AND THE METHOD OF ANALYSIS

THE law of contradiction is necessary to us in order that we may posit partial and practical truths, think out things clearly, decisively and usefully, classify, act, deal with them effectively for particular purposes in our divisions of Space, distinctions of form and property, moments of Time. It represents a formal and strongly dynamic truth of existence in its practical workings which is strongest in the most outward term of things, the material, but becomes less and less rigidly binding as we go upward in the scale, mount on the more subtle rungs of the ladder of being. It is especially necessary for us in dealing with material phenomena and forces; we have to suppose them to be one thing at a time, to have one power at a time and to be limited by their ostensible and practically effective capacities and properties; otherwise we cannot deal with them. But even there, as human thought is beginning to realise, the distinctions made by the intellect and the classifications and practical experiments of Science, while perfectly valid in their own field and for their own purpose, do not represent the whole or the real truth of things, whether of things in the whole or of the thing by itself which we have classified and set artificially apart, isolated for separate analysis. By that isolation we are indeed able to deal with it very practically, very effectively, and we think at first that the effectiveness

of our action proves the entire and sufficient truth of our isolating and analysing knowledge. Afterwards we find that by getting beyond it we can arrive at a greater truth and a greater effectivity.

The isolation is certainly necessary for first knowledge. A diamond is a diamond and a pearl a pearl, each thing of its own class, existing by its distinction from all others, each distinguished by its own form and properties. But each has also properties and elements which are common to both and others which are common to material things in general. And in reality each does not exist only by its distinctions, but much more essentially by that which is common to both; and we get back to the very basis and enduring truth of all material things only when we find that all are the same thing, one energy, one substance or, if you like, one universal motion which throws up, brings out, combines, realises these different forms, these various properties, these fixed and harmonised potentialities of its own being. If we stop short at the knowledge of distinctions, we can deal only with diamond and pearl as they are, fix their values, uses, varieties, make the best ordinary use and profit of them; but if we can get to the knowledge and control of their elements and the common properties of the class to which they belong, we may arrive at the power of making either a diamond or pearl at our pleasure: go farther still and master that which all material things are in their essence and we may arrive even at the power of transmutation which would give the greatest possible control of material Nature. Thus the knowledge of distinctions arrives at its greatest truth and effective use when we arrive at the deeper knowledge of that which reconciles distinctions in the unity behind all variations. That deeper knowledge does not deprive the other and more superficial of effectivity nor convict it of vanity. We cannot

conclude from our ultimate material discovery that there is no original substance or Matter, only energy manifesting substance or manifesting as substance,—that diamond and pearl are non-existent, unreal, only true to the illusion of our senses of perception and action, that the one substance, energy or motion is the sole eternal truth and that therefore the best or only rational use of our science would be to dissolve diamond and pearl and everything else that we can dissolve into this one eternal and original reality and get done with their forms and properties for ever. There is an essentiality of things, a commonalty of things, an individuality of things; the commonalty and individuality are true and eternal powers of the essentiality: that transcends them both, but the three together and not one by itself are the eternal terms of existence.

This truth which we can see, though with difficulty and under considerable restrictions, even in the material world where the subtler and higher powers of being have to be excluded from our intellectual operations, becomes clearer and more powerful when we ascend in the scale. We see the truth of our classifications and distinctions, but also their limits. All things, even while different, are yet one. For practical purposes plant, animal, man are different existences; yet when we look deeper we see that the plant is only an animal with an insufficient evolution of self-consciousness and dynamic force; the animal is man in the making; man himself is that animal and yet the something more of self-consciousness and dynamic power of consciousness that make him man; and yet again he is the something more which is contained and repressed in his being as the potentiality of the divine,—he is a god in the making. In each of these, plant, animal, man, god, the Eternal is there containing and repressing himself as it were in order to make a certain statement

of his being. Each is the whole Eternal concealed. Man himself, who takes up all that went before him and transmutes it into the term of manhood, is the individual human being and yet he is all mankind, the universal man acting in the individual as a human personality. He is all and yet he is himself and unique. He is what he is, but he is also the past of all that he was and the potentiality of all that he is not. We cannot understand him if we look only at his present individuality, but we cannot understand him either if we look only at his commonalty, his general term of manhood, or go back by exclusion from both to an essentiality of his being in which his distinguishing manhood and his particularising individuality seem to disappear. Each thing is the Absolute, all are that One, but in these three terms always the Absolute makes its statement of its developed self-existence. We are not, because of the essential unity, compelled to say that all God's various action and workings are vain, worthless, unreal, phenomenal, illusory, and that the best and only rational or super-rational use we can make of our knowledge is to get away from them, dissolve our cosmic and individual existence into the essential being and get rid of all becoming as a futility for ever.

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We cannot, either, effect a reconciliation or explanation of the original contradictions of existence by taking refuge in our concept of Time. Time, as we know or conceive it, is only our means of realising things in succession, it is a condition and cause of conditions, varies on different planes of existence, varies even for beings on one and the same plane: that is to say, it is not an Absolute and cannot explain the primary relations of the Absolute. They work themselves

out in detail by Time and seem to our mental and vital being to be determined by it; but that seeming does not carry us back to their sources and principles. We make the distinction of conditioned and unconditioned and we imagine that the unconditioned became conditioned, the Infinite became finite at some date in Time, and may cease to be finite at some other date in Time, because it so appears to us in details, particulars or with regard to this or that system of things. But if we look at existence as a whole, we see that infinite and finite co-exist and exist in and by each other. Even if our universe were to disappear and reappear rhythmically in Time, as was the old belief, that too would be only a large detail and would not show that at a particular time all condition ceases in the whole range of infinite existence and all Being becomes the unconditioned, at another it again takes on the reality or the appearance of conditions. The first source and the primary relations lie beyond our mental divisions of Time, in the divine timelessness or else in the indivisible or eternal Time of which our divisions and successions are only figures in a mental experience.

THE INITIAL ERROR OF OUR ANALYTICAL MENTALITY

The indivisibility of the comprehensive Supermind which contains all multiplicity without derogating from its own unity, is a truth upon which we have always to insist, if we are to understand the cosmos and get rid of the initial error of our analytic mentality. A tree evolves out of the seed in which it is already contained, the seed out of the tree; a fixed law, an invariable process reigns in the permanence of the form of manifestation which we call a tree. The mind regards this phenomenon, this birth, life and reproduction of a tree, as

a thing in itself and on that basis studies, classes and explains it. It explains the tree by the seed, the seed by the tree; it declares a law of Nature. But it has explained nothing; it has only analysed and recorded the process of a mystery. Supposing even that it comes to perceive a secret conscious force as the soul, the real being of this form and the rest as merely a settled operation and manifestation of that force, still it tends to regard the form as a separate existence with its separate law of nature and process of development. In the animal and in man with his conscious mentality this separative tendency of the Mind induces it to regard itself also as a separate existence, the conscious subject, and other forms as separate objects of its mentality. This useful arrangement, necessary to life and the first basis of all its practice, is accepted by the mind as an actual fact and thence proceeds all the error of the ego.

But the Supermind works otherwise. The tree and its process would not be what they are, could not indeed exist, if it were a separate existence; forms are what they are by the force of the cosmic existence, they develop as they do as a result of their relation to it and to all its other manifestations. The separate law of their nature is only an application of the universal law and truth of all Nature; their particular development is determined by their place in the general development. The tree does not explain the seed, nor the seed the tree; cosmos explains both and God explains cosmos.

THE NATURE AND COURSE OF EVOLUTION

It is true that Science now affirms an evolutionary terrestrial existence: but if the facts with which Science deals are reliable, the generalisations it hazards are short-lived; it holds them

for some decades or some centuries, then passes to another generalisation, another theory of things. This happens even in physical Science where the facts are solidly ascertainable and verifiable by experiment: in psychology,—which is relevant here, for the evolution of consciousness comes into the picture,—its instability is still greater; it passes there from one theory to another before the first is well-founded; indeed, several conflicting theories hold the field together. No firm metaphysical building can be erected upon these shifting quicksands. Heredity upon which Science builds its concept of life evolution, is certainly a power, a machinery for keeping type or species in unchanged being: the demonstration that it is also an instrument for persistent and progressive variation is very questionable; its tendency is conservative rather than evolutionary,—it seems to accept with difficulty the new character that the Life-Force attempts to force upon it. All the facts show that a type can vary within its own specification of nature, but there is nothing to show that it can go beyond it. It has not yet been really established that ape-kind developed into man; for it would rather seem that a type resembling the ape, but always characteristic of itself and not of apehood, developed within its own tendencies of nature and became what we know as man, the present human being. It is not even established that inferior races of man developed out of themselves the superior races; those of an inferior organisation and capacity perished, but it has not been shown that they left behind the human races of today as their descendants: but still such a development within the type is imaginable. The progress of Nature from Matter to Life, from Life to Mind, may be conceded: but there is no proof yet that Matter developed into Life or Life-energy into Mind-energy; all that can be conceded is that Life has manifested in Matter, Mind in living Matter.

For there is no sufficient proof that any vegetable species developed into an animal existence or that any organisation of inanimate matter developed into a living organism. Even if it be discovered hereafter that under certain chemical or other conditions life makes its appearance, all that will be established by this coincidence is that in certain physical circumstances life manifests, not that certain chemical conditions are constituents of life, are its elements or are the evolutionary cause of a transformation of inanimate into animate matter. Here as elsewhere each grade of being exists in itself and by itself, is manifested according to its own character by its own proper energy, and the gradations above or below it are not origins and resultant sequences but only degrees in the continuous scale of earth-nature.

If it be asked, how then did all these various gradations and types of being come into existence, it can be answered that, fundamentally, they were manifested in Matter by the Consciousness-Force in it, by the power of the Real-Idea building its own significant forms and types for the indwelling Spirit's cosmic existence: the practical or physical method might vary considerably in different grades or stages, although a basic similarity of line may be visible; the creative Power might use not one but many processes or set many forces to act together. In Matter the process is a creation of infinitesimals charged with an immense energy, their association by design and number, the manifestation of larger infinitesimals on that primary basis, the grouping and association of these together to found the appearance of sensible objects, earth, water, minerals, metals, the whole material kingdom. In life also the Consciousness-Force begins with infinitesimal forms of vegetable life and infinitesimal animalcules; it creates an original plasm and multiplies it, creates the living cell as a unit, creates other

kinds of minute biological apparatus like the seed or the gene, uses always the same method of grouping and association so as to build by a various operation various living organisms. A constant creation of types is visible, but that is no indubitable proof of evolution. The types are sometimes distant from each other, sometimes closely similar, sometimes identical in basis but different in detail; all are patterns, and such a variation in patterns with an identical rudimentary basis for all is the sign of a conscious Force playing with its own Idea and developing by it all kinds of possibilities of creation. Animal species in coming into birth may begin with a like rudimentary embryonic or fundamental pattern for all, it may follow out up to a stage certain similarities of development on some or all of its lines; there may too be species that are twi-natured, amphibious, intermediate between one type and another: but all this need not mean that the types developed one from another in an evolutionary series. Other forces than hereditary variation have been at work in bringing about the appearance of new characteristics; there are physical forces such as food, light-rays and others that we are only beginning to know, there are surely others which we do not yet know; there are at work invisible life forces and obscure psychological forces. For these subtler powers have to be admitted even in the physical evolutionary theory to account for natural selection; if the occult or subconscious energy in some types answers to the need of the environment, in others remains unresponsive and unable to survive, this is clearly the sign of a varying life-energy and psychology, of a consciousness and a force other than the physical at work making for variation in Nature. The problem of the method of operation is still too full of obscure and unknown factors for any at present possible structure of theory to be definitive.

Man is a type among many types so constructed, one pattern among the multitude of patterns in the manifestation in Matter. He is the most complex that has been created, the richest in content of consciousness and the curious ingeniousness of his building; he is the head of the earthly creation, but he does not exceed it. Even as others, so he too has his own native law, limits, special kind of existence, *svabhava*, *svadharma*; within those limits he can extend and develop, but he cannot go outside them. If there is a perfection to which he has to arrive, it must be a perfection in his own kind, within his own law of being,—the full play of it, but by observation of its mode and measure, not by transcendence. To exceed himself, to grow into the superman, to put on the nature and capacities of a god would be a contradiction of his self-law, impracticable and impossible. Each form and way of being has its own appropriate way of the delight of being; to seek through the mind the mastery and use and enjoyment of the environment of which he is capable is rightly man the mental being's objective: but to look beyond, to run after an ulterior object or aim of existence, to aspire to surpass the mental stature is to bring in a teleological element into existence which is not visible in the cosmic structure. If a supramental being is to appear in the terrestrial creation, it must be a new and independent manifestation; just as life and mind have manifested in Matter, so supermind must manifest there and the secret Conscious-Energy must create the necessary patterns for this new grade of its potencies. But there is no sign of any such intention in the operations of Nature.

But if a superior creation is intended, then, certainly, it is not out of man that the new grade, type or pattern can develop; for in that case there would be some race or kind or

make of human beings that has already the material of the superman in it, just as the peculiar animal being that developed into humanity had the essential elements of human nature already potential or present in it: there is no such race, kind or type, at most there are only spiritualised mental beings who are seeking to escape out of the terrestrial creation. If by any occult law of Nature such a human development of the supramental being is intended, it could only be by a few in humanity detaching themselves from the race so as to become a first foundation for this new pattern of being. There is no reason to suppose that the whole race could develop this perfection: it cannot be a possibility generalised in the human creature.

THE SCALE OF NATURE

If there are rudiments of life-reaction in the metal, as has been recently contended, it may be identical with life-reaction in the plant in its essence, but what might be called the vital-physical difference is so considerable that one seems to us inanimate, the other, though not apparently conscious, might be called a living creature. Between the highest plant life and lowest animal the gulf is visibly deeper, for it is the difference between mind and the entire absence of any apparent or even rudimentary movement of mind: in the one the stuff of mental consciousness is unawakened though there is a life of vital reactions, a suppressed or subconscious or perhaps only submental sense vibration which seems to be intensely active; in the other, though the life is at first less automatic and secure in the subconscious way of living and in its own new way of overt consciousness imperfectly determined, still mind is awakened,—there is a conscious life, a

profound transition has been made. But the community of the phenomenon of life between plant and animal, however different their organisation, narrows the gulf, even though it does not fill in its profundity. Between the highest animal and the lowest man there is a still deeper though narrower gulf to be crossed, the gulf between sense-mind and the intellect: for however we may insist on the primitive nature of the savage, we cannot alter the fact that the most primitive human being has above and beyond the sense-mind, emotional vitality and primary practical intelligence which we share with the animals, a human intellect and is capable—in whatever limits—of reflection, ideas, conscious invention, religious and ethical thought and feeling, everything fundamental of which man as a race is capable; he has the same kind of intelligence, it differs only in its past instruction and formative training and the degree of its developed capacity, intensity and activity. Still, in spite of these dividing furrows, we can no longer suppose that God or some Demiurge has manufactured each genus and species ready-made in body and in consciousness and left the matter there, having looked upon his work and seen that it was good. It has become evident that a secretly conscious or an inconscient Energy of creation has effected the transition by swift or slow degrees, by whatever means, devices, biological, physical or psychological machinery,—perhaps, having made it, did not care to preserve as distinct forms what were only stepping-stones and had no longer any function nor served any purpose in evolutionary Nature. But this explanation of the gaps is little more than a hypothesis which as yet we cannot sufficiently substantiate. It is probable at any rate that the reason for these radical differences is to be found in the working of the inner Force and not in the outer process of the evolutionary transi-

tion; if we look at it more deeply from that inner side, the difficulty of understanding ceases and these transitions become intelligible and indeed inevitable by the very nature of the evolutionary process and its principle.

For if we look, not at the scientific or physical aspects, but at the psychological side of the question and enquire in what precisely the difference lies, we shall see that it consists in the rise of consciousness to another principle of being. The metal is fixed in the inconscient and inanimate principle of matter; even if we can suppose that it has some reactions suggestive of life in it or at least of rudimentary vibrations that in the plant developed into life, still it is not at all characteristically a form of life; it is characteristically a form of matter. The plant is fixed in a subconscient action of the principle of life,—not that it is not subject to matter or devoid of reactions that find their full meaning only in mind, for it seems to have submental reactions that in us are the foundation of pleasure and pain or of attraction and repulsion; but still it is a form of life, not of mere matter, nor is it, so far as we know, at all a mind-conscious being. Man and the animal are both mentally conscious beings: but the animal is fixed in the vital mind and mind-sense and cannot exceed its limitations, while man has received into his sense-mind the light of another principle, the intellect, which is really at once a reflection and a degradation of the supermind, a ray of gnosis seized by the sense mentality and transformed by it into something other than its source: for it is agnostic like the sense-mind in which and for which it works, not gnostic; it seeks to lay hold on knowledge, because it does not possess it, it does not like supermind hold knowledge in itself as its natural prerogative. In other words, in each of these forms of existence the universal being has fixed its action of consciousness in a different

principle or, as between man and animal, in the modification of a lower by a higher though still not a highest-grade principle. It is this stride from one principle of being to another quite different principle of being that creates the transitions, the furrows, the sharp lines of distance, and makes, not all the difference, but still a radical characteristic difference between being and being in their nature.

GENIUS

The mental life evolving in man is not, indeed, a common possession. In actual appearance it would seem as if it were only developed to the fullest in individuals and as if there were great numbers and even the majority in whom it is either a small and ill-organised part of their normal nature or not evolved at all or latent and not easily made active. Certainly, the mental life is not a finished evolution of Nature; it is not yet firmly founded in the human animal. The sign is that the fine and full equilibrium of vitality and matter, the sane, robust, long-lived human body is ordinarily found only in races or classes of men who reject the effort of thought, its disturbances, its tensions, or think only with the material mind. Civilised man has yet to establish an equilibrium between the fully active mind and the body; he does not yet normally possess it. Indeed, the increasing effort towards a more intense mental life seems to create, frequently, an increasing disequilibrium of the human elements, so that it is possible for eminent scientists to describe genius as a form of insanity, a result of degeneration, a pathological morbidity of Nature. The phenomena which are used to justify this exaggeration, when taken not separately, but in connection with all other relevant data, point to a different truth. Genius

is one attempt of the universal Energy to so quicken and intensify our intellectual powers that they shall be prepared for those more puissant, direct and rapid faculties which constitute the play of the supra-intellectual or divine mind. It is not, then, a freak, an inexplicable phenomenon, but a perfectly natural next step in the right line of her evolution. She has harmonised the bodily life with the material mind, she is harmonising it with the play of the intellectual mentality; for that, although it tends to a depression of the full animal and vital vigour, does not or need not produce active disturbances. And she is shooting yet beyond in the attempt to reach a still higher level. Nor are the disturbances created by her process as great as is often represented. Some of them are the crude beginnings of new manifestations; others are an easily corrected movement of disintegration, often fruitful of fresh activities and always a small price to pay for the far-reaching results that she has in view.

WHAT IS 'LIFE'?

Ordinarily, when we speak of life, we have meant animal life, that which moves, breathes, eats, feels, desires, and, if we speak of the life of plants, it has been almost as a metaphor rather than a reality, for plant life was regarded as a purely material process rather than a biological phenomenon. Especially we have associated life with breathing; the breath is life, it was said in every language, and the formula is true if we change our conception of what we mean by the Breath of Life. But it is evident that spontaneous motion or locomotion, breathing, eating are only processes of life and not life itself; they are means for the generation or release of that constantly stimulating energy which is our vitality and for

that process of disintegration and renewal by which it supports our substantial existence; but these processes of our vitality can be maintained in other ways than by our respiration and our means of sustenance. It is a proved fact that even human life can remain in the body and can remain in full consciousness when breathing and the beating of the heart and other conditions formerly deemed essential to it have been temporarily suspended. And new evidence of phenomena has been brought forward to establish that the plant, to which we can still deny any conscious reaction, has at least a physical life identical with our own and even organised essentially like our own though different in its apparent organisation. If that is proved true, we still have to make a clean sweep of our old facile and false conceptions and get beyond symptoms and externalities to the root of the matter.

In some recent discoveries which, if their conclusions are accepted, must throw an intense light on the problem of Life in Matter, a great Indian physicist has pointed attention to the response to stimulus as an infallible sign of the existence of life. It is especially the phenomenon of plant-life that has been illumined by his data and illustrated in all its subtle functionings; but we must not forget that in the essential point the same proof of vitality, the response to stimulus, the positive state of life and its negative state which we call death, have been affirmed by him in metals as in the plant. Not indeed with the same abundance, not indeed so as to show an essentially identical organisation of life; but it is possible that, could instruments of the right nature and sufficient delicacy be invented, more points of similarity between the metal and plant life could be discovered; and even if it prove not to be so, this might mean that the same or any life organisation is absent, but the beginnings of vitality could still be there.

But if life, however rudimentary in its symptoms, exists in the metal, it must be admitted as present, involved perhaps or elementary and elemental in the earth or other material existences akin to the metal. If we can pursue our enquiries farther, not obliged to stop short where our immediate means of investigation fail us, we may be sure from our unvarying experience of Nature that investigations thus pursued will in the end prove to us that there is no break, no rigid line of demarcation between the earth and the metal formed in it or between the metal and the plant and, pursuing the synthesis farther, that there is none either between the elements and atoms that constitute the earth or metal and the metal or earth that they constitute. Each step of this graded existence prepares the next, holds in itself what appears in that which follows it. Life is everywhere, secret or manifest, organised or elemental, involved or evolved, but universal, all-pervading, imperishable; only its forms and organisations differ.

We must remember that the physical response to stimulus is only an outward sign of life, even as are breathing and locomotion in ourselves. An exceptional stimulus is applied by the experimenter and vivid responses are given which we can at once recognise as indices of vitality in the object of the experiment. But during its whole existence the plant is responding constantly to a constant mass of stimulation from its environment; that is to say, there is a constantly maintained force in it which is capable of responding to the application of force from its surroundings. It is said that the idea of a vital force in the plant or other living organism has been destroyed by these experiments. But when we say that a stimulus has been applied to the plant, we mean that an energised force, a force in dynamic movement has been directed on that object, and when we say that a response is given, we

mean that an energised force capable of dynamic movement and of sensitive vibration answers to the shock. There is a vibrant reception and reply, as well as a will to grow and be, indicative of a submental, a vital-physical organisation of consciousness-force hidden in the form of being. The fact would seem to be then that as there is a constant dynamic energy in movement in the universe which takes various material forms more or less subtle or gross, so in each physical body or object, plant or animal or metal, there is stored and active the same constant dynamic force, and a certain interchange of these two gives us the phenomena which we associate with the idea of life. It is this action that we recognise as the action of Life-Energy and that which so energises itself is the Life-Force. Mind-Energy, Life-Energy, material Energy are different dynamisms of one World-Force.

Even when a form appears to us to be dead, this force still exists in it in potentiality although its familiar operations of vitality are suspended and about to be permanently ended. Within certain limits that which is dead can be revived; the habitual operations, the response, the circulation of active energy can be restored; and this proves that what we call life was still there in the body, latent, that is to say, not active in its usual habits, its habits of ordinary physical functioning, its habits of nervous play and response, its habits in the animal of conscious mental response. It is difficult to suppose that there is a distinct entity called life which has gone entirely out of the body and gets into it again when it feels—how, since there is nothing to connect it with the body?—that somebody is stimulating the form. In certain cases, such as catalepsy, we see that the outward physical signs and operations of life are suspended, but the mentality is there self-possessed and conscious although unable to compel the

usual physical responses. Certainly, it is not the fact that the man is physically dead but mentally alive or that life has gone out of the body while mind still inhabits it, but only that the ordinary physical functioning is suspended, while the mental is still active.

So also, in certain forms of trance, both the physical functionings and the outward mental are suspended, but afterwards resume their operation, in some cases by external stimulation, but more normally by a spontaneous return to activity from within. What has really happened is that the surface mind-force has been withdrawn into subconscious mind and the surface life-force into sub-active life and either the whole man has lapsed into the subconscious existence or else he has withdrawn his outer life into the subconscious while his inner being has been lifted into the superconscient. But the main point for us at present is that the Force, whatever it be, that maintains dynamic energy of life in the body, has indeed suspended its outer operations, but still informs the organised substance. A point comes, however, at which it is no longer possible to restore the suspended activities; and this occurs when either such a lesion has been inflicted on the body as makes it useless or incapable of the habitual functionings or, in the absence of such lesion, when the process of disintegration has begun, that is to say, when the Force that should renew the life-action becomes entirely inert to the pressure of the environing forces with whose mass of stimulation it was wont to keep up a constant interchange. Even then there is Life in the body, but a Life that is busy only with the process of disintegrating the formed substance so that it may escape in its elements and constitute with them new forms. The Will in the universal force that held the form together, now withdraws from constitution and supports instead a

process of dispersion. Not till then is there the real death of the body.

Life then is the dynamic play of a universal Force, a Force in which mental consciousness and nervous vitality are in some form or at least in their principle always inherent and therefore they appear and organise themselves in our world in the forms of Matter. The life-play of this Force manifests itself as an interchange of stimulation and response to stimulation between the different forms it has built up and in which it keeps up its constant dynamic pulsation; each form is constantly taking into itself and giving out again the breath and energy of the common Force; each form feeds upon that and nourishes itself with it by various means, whether indirectly by taking in other forms in which the energy is stored or directly by absorbing the dynamic discharges it receives from outside. All this is the play of Life; but it is chiefly recognisable to us where the organisation of it is sufficient for us to perceive its more outward and complex movements and especially where it partakes of the nervous type of vital energy which belongs to our own organisation. It is for this reason that we are ready enough to admit life in the plant because obvious phenomena of life are there and this becomes still easier if it can be shown that it manifests symptoms of nervousity and has a vital system not very different from our own, but are unwilling to recognise it in the metal and the earth and the chemical atom where these phenomenal developments can with difficulty be detected or do not apparently at all exist.

SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

A theory of spiritual evolution is not identical with a scientific theory of form-evolution and physical life-evolution; it must

stand on its own inherent justification: it may accept the scientific account of physical evolution as a support or an element, but the support is not indispensable. The scientific theory is concerned only with the outward and visible machinery and process, with the detail of Nature's execution, with the physical development of things in Matter and the law of development of life and mind in Matter; its account of the process may have to be considerably changed or may be dropped altogether in the light of new discovery, but that will not affect the self-evident fact of a spiritual evolution, an evolution of Consciousness, a progression of the soul's manifestation in material existence. In its outward aspects this is what the theory of evolution comes to,—there is in the scale of terrestrial existence a development of forms, of bodies, a progressively complex and competent organisation of matter, of life in matter, of consciousness in living matter; in this scale, the better organised the form, the more it is capable of housing a better organised, a more complex and capable, a more developed or evolved life and consciousness. Once the evolutionary hypothesis is put forward and the facts supporting it are marshalled, this aspect of the terrestrial existence becomes so striking as to appear indisputable. The precise machinery by which this is done or the exact genealogy or chronological succession of types of being is a secondary, though in itself an interesting and important question; the development of one form of life out of a precedent less evolved form, natural selection, the struggle for life, the survival of acquired characteristics may or may not be accepted, but the fact of a successive creation with a developing plan in it is the one conclusion which is of primary consequence. Another self-evident conclusion is that there is a graduated necessary succession in the evolution, first the evolution of Matter, next the evolu-

tion of Life in Matter, then the evolution of Mind in living Matter, and in this last stage an animal evolution followed by a human evolution. The first three terms of the succession are too evident to be disputable. It may be debated whether there was a succession of man to animal or a simultaneous initial development, man outstripping the animal in mind evolution; a theory has even been put forward that man was not the last, but the first and eldest of the animal species. This priority of man is an ancient conception, but it was not universal; it is born of the sense of the clear supremacy of man among earthly creatures, the dignity of this supremacy seeming to demand a priority of birth: but in evolutionary fact the superior is not prior but posterior in appearance, the less developed precedes the more developed and prepares it.

In fact, the idea of the priority of the lower forms of life is not altogether absent in ancient thinking. Apart from mythical accounts of creation, we find already in ancient and mediaeval thought in India utterances that favour the priority of the animal over man in the time succession in a sense that agrees with the modern evolutionary conception. A Upanishad declares that the Self or Spirit after deciding on life creation first formed animal kinds like the cow and horse, but the gods,—who are in the thought of the Upanishads powers of Consciousness and powers of Nature,—found them to be insufficient vehicles, and the Spirit finally created the form of man which the gods saw to be excellently made and sufficient and they entered into it for their cosmic functions. This is a clear parable of the creation of more and more developed forms till one was found that was capable of housing a developed consciousness. In the Puranas it is stated that the tamasic animal creation was the first in time. Tamas is the Indian word for the principle of inertia of consciousness and force: a consciousness dull and

sluggish and incompetent in its play is said to be tamasic; a force, a life-energy that is indolent and limited in its capacity, bound to a narrow range of instinctive impulses, not developing, not seeking farther, not urged to a greater kinetic action or a more luminously conscious action, would be assigned to the same category. The animal, in whom there is this less developed force of consciousness, is prior in creation; the more developed human consciousness, in which there is a greater force of kinetic mind-energy and light of perception, is a later creation. The Tantra speaks of a soul fallen from its status passing through many lacs of births in plant and animal forms before it can reach the human level and be ready for salvation. Here, again, there is implied the conception of vegetable and animal life-forms as the lower steps of a ladder, humanity as the last or culminating development of the conscious being, the form which the soul has to inhabit in order to be capable of the spiritual motive and a spiritual issue out of mentality, life and physicality. This is indeed the normal conception, and it recommends itself so strongly both to reason and intuition that it hardly needs debate,—the conclusion is almost unescapable.

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In the previous stages of the evolution Nature's first care and effort had to be directed towards a change in the physical organisation, for only so could there be a change of consciousness; this was a necessity imposed by the insufficiency of the force of consciousness already in formation to effect a change in the body. But in man a reversal is possible, indeed inevitable; for it is through his consciousness, through its transmutation and no longer through a new bodily organism as a first instrumentation that the evolution can and must be

effected. In the inner reality of things a change of consciousness was always the major fact, the evolution has always had a spiritual significance and the physical change was only instrumental; but this relation was concealed by the first abnormal balance of the two factors, the body of the external Inconscience outweighing and obscuring in importance the spiritual element, the conscious being. But once the balance has been righted, it is no longer the change of body that must precede the change of consciousness; the consciousness itself by its mutation will necessitate and operate whatever mutation is needed for the body. It has to be noted that the human mind has already shown a capacity to aid Nature in the evolution of new types of plant and animal; it has created new forms of its environment, developed by knowledge and discipline considerable changes in its own mentality. It is not an impossibility that man should aid Nature consciously also in his own spiritual and physical evolution and transformation. The urge to it is already there and partly effective, though still incompletely understood and accepted by the surface mentality; but one day it may understand, go deeper within itself and discover the means, the secret energy, the intended operation of the Consciousness-Force within which is the hidden reality of what we call Nature.

SPACE, TIME AND THE SPIRIT

We are apt to see Space as a static extension in which all things stand or move together in a fixed order; we see Time as a mobile extension which is measured by movement and event: Space then would be Brahman in self-extended status; Time would be Brahman in self-extended movement. But this may be only a first view and inaccurate: Space may be really a

constant mobile, the constancy and the persistent time-relation of things in it creating the sense of stability of Space, the mobility creating the sense of time-movement in stable Space. Or, again, Space would be Brahman extended for the holding together of forms and objects; Time would be Brahman self-extended for the deployment of the movement of self-power carrying forms and objects; the two would then be a dual aspect of one and the same self-extension of the cosmic Eternal.

A purely physical Space might be regarded as in itself a property of Matter; but Matter is a creation of Energy in movement. Space therefore in the material world could be either a fundamental self-extension of material Energy or its self-formed existence-field, its representation of the Inconscient Infinity in which it is acting, a figure in which it accommodates the formulas and movements of its own action and self-creation. Time would be itself the course of that movement or else an impression created by it, an impression of something that presents itself to us as regularly successive in its appearance,—a division or a continuum upholding the continuity of movement and yet marking off its successions,—because the movement itself is regularly successive. Or else Time could be a dimension of Space necessary for the complete action of the Energy, but not understood by us as such because it is seen by our conscious subjectivity as something itself subjective, felt by our mind, not perceived by our senses, and therefore not recognised as a dimension of space which has to us the appearance of a sense-created or sense-perceived objective extension.

In any case, if Spirit is the fundamental reality, Time and Space must either be conceptive conditions under which the Spirit sees its own movement of energy or else they must be

fundamental conditions of the Spirit itself which assume a different appearance or status according to the status of consciousness in which they manifest. In other words there is a different Time and Space for each status of our consciousness and even different movements of Time and Space within each status; but all would be renderings of a fundamental spiritual reality of Time-Space. In fact, when we go behind physical space, we become aware of an extension on which all this movement is based and this extension is spiritual and not material; it is Self or Spirit containing all action of its own Energy. This origin or basic reality of Space begins to become apparent when we draw back from the physical: for then we become aware of a subjective Space-extension in which mind itself lives and moves and which is other than physical Space-Time, and yet there is an interpenetration; for our mind can move in its own space in such a way as to effectuate a movement also in space of Matter or act upon something distant in space of Matter. In a still deeper condition of consciousness we are aware of a pure spiritual Space; in this awareness Time may no longer seem to exist, because all movement ceases, or, if there is a movement or happening, it can take place independent of any observable Time sequence.

If we go behind Time by a similar inward motion, drawing back from the physical and seeing it without being involved in it, we discover that Time observation and Time movement are relative, but Time itself is real and eternal. Time observation depends not only on the measures used, but on the consciousness and the position of the observer: moreover, each state of consciousness has a different Time relation; Time in Mind consciousness and Mind Space has not the same sense and measure of its movements as in physical

Space; it moves there quickly or slowly according to the state of the consciousness. Each state of consciousness has its own Time and yet there can be relations of Time between them; and when we go behind the physical surface, we find several different Time statuses and Time movements co-existent in the same consciousness. This is evident in dream Time where a long sequence of happenings can occur in a period which corresponds to a second or a few seconds of physical Time. There is then a certain relation between different Time statuses but no ascertainable correspondence of measure. It would seem as if Time had no objective reality, but depends on whatever conditions may be established by action of consciousness in its relation to status and motion of being: Time would seem to be purely subjective. But, in fact, Space also would appear by the mutual relation of Mind-Space and Matter-Space to be subjective; in other words, both are the original spiritual extension, but it is rendered by mind in its purity into a subjective mind-field and by sense-mind into an objective field of sense-perception. Subjectivity and objectivity are only two sides of one consciousness, and the cardinal fact is that any given Time or Space or any given Time-Space as a whole is a status of being in which there is a movement of the consciousness and force of the being, a movement that creates or manifests events and happenings; it is the relation of the consciousness that sees and the force that formulates the happenings, a relation inherent in the status, which determines the sense of Time and creates our awareness of Time-movement, Time-relation, Time-measure. In its fundamental truth the original status of Time behind all its variations is nothing else than the eternity of the Eternal, just as the fundamental truth of Space, the original sense of its reality, is the infinity of the Infinite.

PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is the science of consciousness and its states and operations in Nature and, if that can be glimpsed or experienced, its states and operations beyond what we know as Nature.

It is not enough to observe and know the movements of our surface Nature and the superficial nature of other living creatures just as it is not enough for Science to observe and know as electricity only the movements of lightning in the clouds or for the astronomer to observe and know only those movements and properties of the stars that are visible to the unaided eye. Here as there a whole world of occult phenomena have to be laid bare and brought under control before the psychologist can hope to be master of his province.

Our observable consciousness, that which we call ourselves, is only the little visible part of our being. It is a small field below which are depths and farther depths and widths and ever wider widths which support and supply it but to which it has no visible access. All that is our self, our being; what we see at the top is only our ego and its visible nature.

Even the movements of this little surface nature cannot be understood nor its true law discovered until we know all that is below or behind and supplies it—and know too all that is around it and above.

For below this conscient nature is the vast Inconscient out of which we come. The Inconscient is greater, deeper, more original, more potent to shape and govern what we are and do than our little derivative conscient nature. Inconscient to us, to our surface view, but not inconscient in itself or to itself, it is a sovereign guide, worker, determinant, creator. Not to know it is not to know our nether origins and the origin of the most part of what we are and do. And the Inconscient is not all.

For behind our little frontal ego and nature is a whole subliminal kingdom of inner consciousness with many planes and provinces. There are in that kingdom many powers, movements, personalities which are part of ourselves and help to form our little surface personality and its powers and movements. This inner self, these inner persons we do not know, but they know us and observe and dictate our speech, our thoughts, feelings, doings even more directly than the Inconscient below us.

Around us too is a circumconscient Universal of which we are a portion. This circumconscience is pouring its forces, suggestions, stimulus, compulsions into us at every moment of our existence.

Around us is a universal Mind of which our mind is a formation and our thoughts, feelings, will, impulses are continually little more than a personally modified reception and transcription of its thought-waves, its force-currents, its foam of emotion and sensation, its billows of impulse.

Around us is a permanent universal Life of which our petty flow of life-formation that begins and ceases is only a small dynamic wave.

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We become aware, in a certain experience, of a range of being superconscient to all these three, aware too of something, a supreme highest Reality sustaining and exceeding them all, which humanity speaks of vaguely as Spirit, God, the Over-soul: from these superconscient ranges we have visitations and in our highest being we tend towards them and to that supreme Spirit. There is then in our total range of existence a superconscience as well as a subconscious and inconscience, overarching and perhaps enveloping our subliminal and our

waking selves, but unknown to us, seemingly unattainable and incommunicable.

OCCULTISM

Occultism is in its essence man's effort to arrive at a knowledge of secret truths and potentialities of Nature which will lift him out of slavery to his physical limits of being, an attempt in particular to possess and organise the mysterious, occult, outwardly still undeveloped direct power of Mind upon Life and of both Mind and Life over Matter. There is at the same time an endeavour to establish communication with worlds and entities belonging to the supraphysical heights, depths and intermediate levels of cosmic Being and to utilise this communion for the mastery of a higher Truth and for a help to man in his will to make himself sovereign over Nature's powers and forces. This human aspiration takes its stand on the belief, intuition or intimation that we are not mere creatures of the mud, but souls, minds, wills that can know all the mysteries of this and every world and become not only Nature's pupils but her adepts and masters. The occultist sought to know the secret of physical things also and in this effort he furthered astronomy, created chemistry, gave an impulse to other sciences, for he utilised geometry also and the science of numbers; but still more he sought to know the secrets of supernature. In this sense occultism might be described as the science of the supernatural; but it is in fact only the discovery of the supraphysical, the surpassing of the material limit,—the heart of occultism is not the impossible chimera which hopes to go beyond or outside all force of Nature and make pure phantasy and arbitrary miracle omnipotently effective. What seems to us supernatural is in fact either a

spontaneous irruption of the phenomena of other-Nature into physical Nature or, in the work of the occultist, a possession of the knowledge and power of the higher orders or grades of cosmic Being and Energy and the direction of their forces and processes towards the production of effects in the physical world by seizing on possibilities of interconnection and means for a material effectuality. There are powers of the mind and the life-force which have not been included in Nature's present systematisation of mind and life in matter, but are potential and can be brought to bear upon material things and happenings or even brought in and added to the present systematisation so as to enlarge the control of mind over our own life and body or to act on the minds, lives, bodies of others or on the movements of cosmic Forces. The modern admission of hypnotism is an example of such a discovery and systematised application,—though still narrow and limited, limited by its method and formula,—of occult powers which otherwise touch us only by a casual or a hidden action whose process is unknown to us or imperfectly caught by a few; for we are all the time undergoing a battery of suggestions, thought suggestions, impulse suggestions, will suggestions, emotional and sensational suggestions, thought waves, life waves that come on us or into us from others or from the universal Energy, but act and produce their effects without our knowledge. A systematised endeavour to know these movements and their law and possibilities, to master and use the power or Nature-force behind them or to protect ourselves from them would fall within one province of occultism: but it would only be a small part even of that province; for wide and multiple are the possible fields, uses, processes of this vast range of little explored Knowledge.

In modern times, as physical Science enlarged its discoveries and released the secret material forces of Nature into an action governed by human knowledge for human use, occultism receded and was finally set aside on the ground that the physical alone is real and mind and life are only departmental activities of Matter. On this basis, believing material Energy to be the key of all things, Science has attempted to move towards a control of mind and life processes by a knowledge of the material instrumentation and process of our normal and abnormal mind and life functionings and activities; the spiritual is ignored as only one form of mentality. It may be observed in passing that if this endeavour succeeded, it might not be without danger for the existence of the human race, even as now are certain other scientific discoveries misused or clumsily used by a humanity mentally and morally unready for the handling of powers so great and perilous; for it would be an artificial control applied without any knowledge of the secret forces which underlie and sustain our existence. Occultism in the West could be thus easily pushed aside because it never reached its majority, never acquired ripeness and a philosophic or sound systematic foundation. It indulged too freely in the romance of the supernatural or made the mistake of concentrating its major effort on the discovery of formulas and effective modes for using supernormal powers. It deviated into magic white and black or into a romantic or thaumaturgic paraphernalia of occult mysticism and the exaggeration of what was after all a limited and scanty knowledge. These tendencies and this insecurity of mental foundation made it difficult to defend and easy to discredit, a target facile and vulnerable. In Egypt and the East this line of knowledge arrived at a greater and more comprehensive endeavour: this ampler maturity can be

seen still intact in the remarkable system of the Tantras; it was not only a many-sided science of the supernormal but supplied the basis of all the occult elements of religion and even developed a great and powerful system of spiritual discipline and self-realisation. For the highest occultism is that which discovers the secret movements and dynamic supernormal possibilities of mind and life and spirit and uses them in their native force or by an applied process for the greater effectivity of our mental, vital and spiritual being.

Occultism is associated in popular idea with magic and magical formulae and a supposed mechanism of the supernatural. But this is only one side, nor is it altogether a superstition as is vainly imagined by those who have not looked deeply or at all at this covert side of secret Nature-Force or experimented with its possibilities. Formulas and their application, a mechanisation of latent forces, can be astonishingly effective in the occult use of mind power and life power just as it is in physical Science, but this is only a subordinate method and a limited direction. For mind and life forces are plastic, subtle and variable in their action and have not the material rigidity; they need a subtle and plastic intuition in the knowledge of them, in the interpretation of their action and process and in their application,—even in the interpretation and action of their established formulas. An overstress on mechanisation and rigid formulation is likely to result in sterilisation or a formalised limitation of knowledge and, on the pragmatic side, to much error, ignorant convention, misuse and failure. Now that we are outgrowing the superstition of the sole truth of Matter, a swing backward towards the old occultism and to new formulations, as well as to a scientific investigation of the still hidden secrets and powers of mind and a close study of psychic and abnormal or supernormal psychological pheno-

mena, is possible and, in parts, already visible. But if it is to fulfil itself, the true foundation, the true aim and direction, the necessary restrictions and precautions of this line of inquiry have to be rediscovered; its most important aim must be the discovery of the hidden truths and powers of the mind-force and the life-power and the greater forces of the concealed spirit. Occult science is, essentially, the science of the subliminal, the subliminal in ourselves and the subliminal in world-nature, and of all that is in connection with the subliminal, including the subconscious and the superconscious, and the use of it as part of self-knowledge and world-knowledge and for the right dynamisation of that knowledge.

SCIENCE AND SOCIOLOGICAL IDEALS

The growth of modern Science has meanwhile created new ideas and tendencies, on one side an exaggerated individualism of rather vitalistic egoism, on the other the quite opposite ideal of collectivism. Science investigating life discovered that the root nature of all living is a struggle to take the best advantage of the environment for self-preservation, self-fulfilment, self-aggrandisement. Human thought seizing in its usual arbitrary and trenchant fashion upon this aspect of modern knowledge has founded on it theories of a novel kind which erect into a gospel the right for each to live his own life not merely by utilising others, but even at the expense of others. The first object of life in this view is for the individual to survive as long as he may, to become strong, efficient, powerful, to dominate his environment and his fellows and to raise himself on this strenuous and egoistic line to his full stature of capacity and reap his full measure of enjoyment. Philosophies like Nietzsche's, certain forms of Anarchism,—not

the idealistic Anarchism of the thinker which is rather the old individualism of the ideal reason carried to its logical conclusion,—certain forms too of Imperialism have been largely influenced and strengthened by this type of ideas, though not actually created by them.

On the other hand, Science investigating life has equally discovered that not only is the individual life best secured and made efficient by association with other and subjection to a law of communal self-development rather than by aggressive self-affirmation, but that actually what Nature seeks to preserve is not the individual but the type and that in her scale of values the pack, herd, hive or swarm takes precedence over the individual animal or insect and the human group over the individual human being. Therefore in the true law and nature of things the individual should live for all and constantly subordinate and sacrifice himself to the growth, efficiency and progress of the race rather than live for his own self-fulfilment and subordinate the race life to his own needs. Modern collectivism derives its victorious strength from the impression made upon human thought by this opposite aspect of modern knowledge. We have seen how the German mind took up both these ideas and combined them on the basis of the present facts of human life: it affirmed the entire subordination of the individual to the community, nation or State; it affirmed, on the other hand, with equal force the egoistic self-assertion of the individual nation as against others or against any group or all the groups of nations which constitute the totality of the human race.

But behind this conflict between the idea of a nationalistic and imperialistic egoism and the old individualistic doctrine of individual and national liberty and separateness, there is

striving to arise a new idea of human universalism or collectivism for the race which, if it succeeds in becoming a power, is likely to overcome the ideal of national separatism and liberty as it has overcome within the society itself the ideal of individual freedom and separate self-fulfilment. This new idea demands of the nation that it shall subordinate, if not merge and sacrifice, its free separateness to the life of a larger collectivity, whether that of an imperialistic groups or a continental or cultural unity, as in the idea of a united Europe, or the total united life of the human race.

The principle of subjectivism entering into human thought and action, while necessarily it must make a great difference in the view-point, the motive-power and the character of our living, does not at first appear to make any difference in its factors. Subjectivism and objectivism start from the same data, the individual and the collectivity, the complex nature of each with its various powers of the mind, life and body and the search for the law of their self-fulfilment and harmony. But objectivism proceeding by the analytical reason takes an external and mechanical view of the whole problem. It looks at the world as a thing, an object, a process to be studied by an observing reason which places itself abstractly outside the elements and the sum of what it has to consider and observes it thus from outside as one would an intricate mechanism. The laws of this process are considered as so many mechanical rules or settled forces acting upon the individual or the group which, when they have been observed and distinguished by the reason, have by one's will or by some will to be organised and applied fully much as Science applies the laws it discovers. These laws or rules have to be imposed on the individual by his own abstract reason and will isolated as a ruling authority from his other parts

or by the reason and will of other individuals or of the group, and they have to be imposed on the group itself either by its own collective reason and will embodied in some machinery of control which the mind considers as something apart from the life of the group or by the reason and will of some other group external to it or of which it is in some way a part. So the State is viewed in modern political thought as an entity in itself, as if it were something apart from the community and its individuals, something which has the right to impose itself on them and control them in the fulfilment of some idea of right, good or interest which is inflicted on them by a restraining and fashioning power rather than developed in them and by them as a thing towards which their self and nature are impelled to grow. Life is to be managed, harmonised, perfected by an adjustment, a manipulation, a machinery through which it is passed and by which it is shaped. A law outside oneself,—outside even when it is discovered or determined by the individual reason and accepted or enforced by the individual will,—this is the governing idea of objectivism; a mechanical process of management, ordering, perfection, this is its conception of practice.

Subjectivism proceeds from within and regards everything from the point of view of a containing and developing self-consciousness. The law here is within ourselves; life is a self-creating process, a growth and development at first subconscious, then half-conscious and at last more and more fully conscious of that which we are potentially and hold within ourselves; the principle of its progress is an increasing self-recognition, self-realisation and a resultant self-shaping. Reason and will are only effective movements of the self, reason a process in self-recognition, will a force for self-

affirmation and self-shaping. Moreover, reason and intellectual will are only a part of the means by which we recognise and realise ourselves. Subjectivism tends to take a large and complex view of our nature and being and to recognise many powers of knowledge, many forces of effectuation. Even, we see it in its first movement away from the external and objective method discount and belittle the importance of the work of the reason and assert the supremacy of the life-impulse or the essential Will-to-be in opposition to the claims of the intellect or else affirm some deeper power of knowledge, called nowadays the intuition, which sees things in the whole, in their truth, in their profundities and harmonies while intellectual reason breaks up, falsifies, affirms superficial appearances and harmonises only by a mechanical adjustment. But substantially we can see that what is meant by this intuition is the self-consciousness, feeling, perceiving, grasping in its substance and aspects rather than analysing in its mechanism its own truth and nature and powers. The whole impulse of subjectivism is to get at the self, to live in the self, to see by the self, to live out the truth of the self internally and externally but always from an internal initiation and centre.

But still there is the question of the truth of the self, what it is, where is its real abiding-place; and here subjectivism has to deal with the same factors as the objective view of life and existence. We may concentrate on the individual life and consciousness as the self and regard its power, freedom, increasing light and satisfaction and joy as the object of living and thus arrive at a subjective individualism. We may, on the other hand, lay stress on the group consciousness, the collective self; we may see man only as an expression of this group-self necessarily incomplete in his individual or separate

being, complete only by that larger entity, and we may wish to subordinate the life of the individual man to the growing power, efficiency, knowledge, happiness, self-fulfilment of the race or even sacrifice it and consider it as nothing except in so far as it lends itself to the life and growth of the community or the kind. We may claim to exercise a righteous oppression on the individual and teach him intellectually and practically that he has no claim to exist, no right to fulfil himself except in his relations to the collectivity. These alone then are to determine his thought, action and existence and the claim of the individual to have a law of his own being, a law of his own nature which he has a right to fulfil and his demand for freedom of thought involving necessarily the freedom to err and for freedom of action involving necessarily the freedom to stumble and sin may be regarded as an insolence and a chimera. The collective self-consciousness will then have the right to invade at every point the life of the individual, to refuse to it all privacy and apartness, all self-concentration and isolation, all independence and self-guidance and determine everything for it by what it conceives to be the best thought and highest will and rightly dominant feeling, tendency, sense of need, desire for self-satisfaction of the collectivity.

But also we may enlarge the idea of the self and, as objective Science sees a universal force of Nature which is the one reality and of which everything is the process, we may come subjectively to the realisation of a universal Being or Existence which fulfils itself in the world and the individual and the group with an impartial regard for all as equal powers of its self-manifestation. This is obviously the self-knowledge which is most likely to be right, since it most comprehensively embraces and accounts for the various aspects of the world-

process and the eternal tendencies of humanity. In this view neither the separate growth of the individual nor the all-absorbing growth of the group can be the ideal, but an equal, simultaneous and, as far as may be, parallel development of both, in which each helps to fulfil the other. Each being has his own truth of independent self-realisation and his truth of self-realisation in the life of others and should feel, desire, help, participate more and more, as he grows in largeness and power, in the harmonious and natural growth of all the individual selves and all the collective selves of the one universal Being. These two, when properly viewed, would not be separate, opposite or really conflicting lines of tendency, but the same impulse of the one common existence, companion movements separating only to return upon each other in a richer and larger unity and mutual consequence.

Similarly, the subjective search for the self may, like the objective, lean preponderantly to identification with the conscious physical life, because the body is or seems to be the frame and determinant here of the mental and vital movements and capacities. Or it may identify itself with the vital being, the life-soul in us and its emotions, desires, impulses, seekings for power and growth and egoistic fulfilment. Or it may rise to a conception of man as a mental and moral being, exalt to the first place his inner growth, power and perfection, individual and collective, and set it before us as the true aim of our existence. A sort of subjective materialism, pragmatic and outward-going, is a possible standpoint; but in this the subjective tendency cannot long linger. For its natural impulse is to go always inward and it only begins to feel itself and have satisfaction of itself when it gets to the full conscious life within and feels all its power, joy and forceful potentiality pressing for fulfilment. Man at this stage regards himself as

a profound, vital Will-to-be which uses body as its instrument and to which the powers of mind are servants and ministers. This is the cast of that vitalism which in various striking forms has played recently so great a part and still exercises a considerable influence on human thought. Beyond it we get to a subjective idealism now beginning to emerge and become prominent, which seeks the fulfilment of man in the satisfaction of his inmost religious, aesthetic, intuitive, his highest intellectual and ethical, his deepest sympathetic and emotional nature and, regarding this as the fullness of our being and the whole object of our being, tries to subject to it the physical and vital existence. These come to be considered rather as a possible symbol and instrument of the subjective life flowing out into forms than as having any value in themselves. A certain tendency to mysticism, occultism and the search for a self independent of the life and the body accompanies this new movement—new to modern life after the reign of individualism and objective intellectualism—and emphasises its real trend and character.

But here also it is possible for subjectivism to go beyond and to discover the true Self as something greater even than mind. Mind, life and body then become merely an instrumentation for the increasing expression of this Self in the world,—instruments not equal in their hierarchy, but equal in their necessity to the whole, so that their complete perfection and harmony and unity as elements of our self-expression become essential to the true aim of our living. And yet that aim would not be to perfect life, body and mind in themselves, but to develop them so as to make a fit basis and fit instruments for the revelation in our inner and outer life of the luminous Self, the secret Godhead who is one and yet various in all of us, in every being and existence, thing and creature. The

ideal of human existence personal and social would be its progressive transformation into a conscious outflowing of the joy, power, love, light, beauty of the transcendent and universal Spirit.

WHAT IS YOGA?

Essentially, Yoga is a generic name for the processes and the result of processes by which we transcend or shed off our present modes of being and rise to a new, a higher, a wider mode of consciousness which is not that of the ordinary animal and intellectual man. Yoga is the exchange of an egoistic for a universal or cosmic consciousness lifted towards or informed by the super-cosmic, transcendent Unnameable who is the source and support of all things. Yoga is the passage of the human thinking animal towards the God-consciousness from which he has descended. In that ascent we find many levels and stages, plateau after plateau of the hill whose summit touches the Truth of things; but at every stage the saying of the Gita applies in an ever higher degree. Even a little of this new law and inner order delivers the soul out of the great peril by which it had been overtaken in its worldward descent, the peril of the ignorance by which the unilluminated intellect even when it is keenest or sagest must ever be bound and limited, of the sorrow and sin from which the unpurified heart, even when it wears the richest purple of aspiration and feeling, must ever suffer soil and wound and poverty, and of the vanity of its works to which the undivinisised will of man, even when it is most vehement and powerful or Olympian and victorious, must eternally be subject. It is the utility of Yoga that it opens to us a gate of escape out of the vicious circle of our ordinary human existence.

But the greatest skill in works of Yoga is that which to the animal man seems its greatest ineptitude. For all this difficult attainment, the latter will say, may lead to anything you please, but we have to lose our personal life, abandon our personal objects, annul our personal will and pleasure and without these life cannot be worth living. Now the object of all skill in works must be evidently to secure the best welfare either of ourselves or of others or of all. The ordinary man calls it welfare to secure momentarily some transient object, to wade for it through a sea of grief and suffering and painful labour and to fall from it again still deeper into the same distressful element in search of a new transient object. The greatest cunning of Yoga is to have detected this cheat of the mind and its desires and dualities and to have found the way to an abiding peace, a universal delight and an all-embracing satisfaction, which can not only be enjoyed for oneself but communicated to others. That too arises out of the change of our being; for the pure truth of existence carries also in it the unalloyed delight of existence, they are inseparable in the status of the infinite.

OUR PSYCHOLOGICAL EXISTENCE

To the ordinary man his psychological existence is fairly simple;—a few desires, some imperative intellectual and aesthetic cravings, some tastes, a few ruling ideas amid a great current of unconnected and mostly trivial thought, some vital needs, physical health and disease, a few joys and griefs, some disorders of mind or body, all arranging themselves in some rough practical fashion, this is the material of his existence. The average human being is in his inward existence as crude and undeveloped as the primitive

man was in his outward life. But when we go within ourselves,—and Yoga means a plunge into all the profundities of the soul,—we find ourselves subjectively, as man in his growth has found himself objectively, surrounded by a whole complex world which we have to know in order to conquer. The most disconcerting discovery is to find that every part of us, intellect, sense-mind, nervous or desire-self, the heart, the body has each, as it were, its own formation and complex individuality and neither agrees with itself nor with the others nor with the centralised ego which we call ourselves. It is a roughly constituted chaos into which we have to introduce the principle of a more divine order.

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Accepting life, the sadhaka of the integral Yoga, has to bear not only his own burden, but a great part of the world's burden also. Therefore his Yoga has much more of the nature of a battle than others and not only of an individual battle but of a collective war waged over a considerable country. He has not only to conquer the forces of egoistic disorder and falsehood in himself, but to conquer them as representatives of the same forces in the world. This representative character gives them a greater capacity of resistance and recurrence and he will often find that even after he has won a battle for himself, he has to win it over again, perhaps often, because his inner existence has already been so much enlarged that it contains not only his own being with its needs and experiences but also the being of others. Nor is he permitted to solve too arbitrarily the conflict of his inner members. He has to harmonise knowledge and faith, love and power, the passivity of the soul living in the transcendent

calm with the activity of the divine helper and the divine warrior. He has to deal always with the same oppositions of the reason, the senses, the heart, the desires, the physical body, but he has to deal with them in another fashion. Accepting all these instruments for the divine realisation and manifestation he has to convert their discords and to enlighten and transfigure them all, integrally.

RELIGION, THE SCIENCE OF THE INFINITE

Religion is the first attempt of man to get beyond himself and beyond the obvious and material facts of his existence. Its first essential work is to confirm and make real to him his subjective sense of an Infinite on which his material and mental being depends and the aspiration of his soul to come into its presence and live in contact with it. Its function is to assure him too of that possibility of which he has always dreamed, but of which his ordinary life gives him no assurance, the possibility of transcending himself and growing out of bodily life and mortality into the joy of immortal life and spiritual existence. It also confirms in him the sense that there are worlds or planes of existence other than that in which his lot is now cast, worlds in which this mortality and this subjection to evil and suffering are not the natural state, but rather bliss of immortality is the eternal condition. Incidentally, it gives him a rule of mortal life by which he shall prepare himself for immortality. He is a soul and not a body and his earthly life is a means by which he determines the future conditions of his spiritual being. So much is common to all religions; beyond this we get from them no assured certainty. Their voices vary; some tell us that one life on earth is all we have in which to determine our future existence, deny the past

immortality of the soul and assert only its future immortality, threaten it even with the incredible dogma of a future of eternal suffering for those who miss the right path, while others more large and rational affirm successive existences by which the soul grows into the knowledge of the Infinite with a complete assurance for all of ultimate arrival and perfection. Some present the Infinite to us as a Being other than ourselves with whom we can have personal relations, others as an impersonal existence into which our separate being has to merge; some therefore give us as our goal worlds beyond in which we dwell in the presence of the Divine, others a cessation of world-existence by immergence in the Infinite. Most invite us to bear or to abandon earthly life as a trial or a temporary affliction or a vanity and fix our hopes beyond; in some we find a vague hint of a future triumph of the Spirit, the Divine in the body, upon this earth, in the collective life of man, and so justify not only the separate hope and aspiration of the individual but the united and sympathetic hope and aspiration of the race. Religion in fact is not knowledge, but a faith and aspiration; it is justified indeed both by an imprecise intuitive knowledge of large spiritual truths and by the subjective experience of souls that have risen beyond the ordinary life, but in itself it only gives us the hope and faith by which we may be induced to aspire to the intimate possession of the hidden tracts and larger realities of the Spirit. That we turn always the few distinct truths and the symbols or the particular discipline of a religion into hard and fast dogmas, is a sign that as yet we are only infants in the spiritual knowledge and are yet far from the science of the Infinite.

EVOLUTION OF RELIGION

Evolutionary Nature in her first awakening of man to rudimentary spiritual consciousness must begin with a vague sense of the Infinite and the Invisible surrounding the physical being, a sense of the limitation and impotence of human mind and will and of something greater than himself concealed in the world, of Potencies beneficent or maleficent which determine the results of his action, a Power that is behind the physical world he lives in and has perhaps created it and him, or Powers that inform and rule her movements while they themselves perhaps are ruled by the greater Unknown that is beyond them. He had to determine what they are and find means of communication so that he might propitiate them or call them to his aid; he sought also for means by which he could find out and control the springs of the hidden movements of Nature. This he could not do at once by his reason because his reason could at first deal only with physical facts, but this was the domain of the Invisible and needed a supraphysical vision and knowledge; he had to do it by an extension of the faculty of intuition and instinct which was already there in the animal. This faculty, prolonged in the thinking being and mentalised, must have been more sensitive and active in early man, though still mostly on a lower scale, for he had to rely on it largely for all his first necessary discoveries: he had to rely also on the aid of subliminal experience; for the subliminal too must have been more active, more ready to upsurge in him, more capable of formulating its phenomena on the surface, before he learned to depend completely on his intellect and senses. The intuitions that he thus received by contact with Nature, his mind systematised and so created the early forms of religion. This active

and ready power of intuition also gave him the sense of supra-physical forces behind the physical, and his instinct and a certain subliminal or supernormal experience of supraphysical beings with whom he could somehow communicate turned him towards the discovery of effective and canalising means for a dynamic utilisation of this knowledge; so were created magic and the other early forms of occultism. At some time it must have dawned on him that he had something in him which was not physical, a soul that survived the body; certain supernormal experiences which became active because of the pressure to know the invisible, must have helped to formulate his first crude ideas of this entity within him. It would only be later that he began to realise that what he perceived in the action of the universe was also there in some form within him and that in him also were elements that responded to invisible powers and forces for good or for evil; so would begin his religio-ethical formations and his possibilities of spiritual experience. An amalgam of primitive intuitions, occult ritual, religio-social ethics, mystical knowledge or experiences symbolised in myth but with their sense preserved by a secret initiation and discipline is the early, at first very superficial and external stage of human religion. In the beginning these elements were, no doubt, crude and poor and defective, but they acquired depth and range and increased in some cultures to a great amplitude and significance.

But as the mental and life development increased,—for that is Nature's first preoccupation in man and she does not hesitate to push it forward at the cost of other elements that will need to be taken up fully hereafter,—there is a tendency towards intellectualisation, and the first necessary intuitive, instinctive and subliminal formations are overlaid with the structures erected by a growing force of reason and mental

intelligence. As man discovers the secrets and processes of physical Nature, he moves more and more away from his early recourse to occultism and magic; the presence and felt influence of gods and invisible powers recedes as more and more is explained by natural workings, the mechanical procedure of Nature: but he still feels the need of a spiritual element and spiritual factors in his life and therefore keeps for a time the two activities running together. But the occult elements of religion, though still held as beliefs or preserved but also buried in rites and myths, lose their significance and diminish and the intellectual element increases; finally, where and when the intellectualising tendency becomes too strong, there is a movement to cut out everything but creed, institution, formal practice and ethics. Even the element of spiritual experience dwindles and it is considered sufficiently to rely only on faith, emotional fervour and moral conduct; the first amalgam of religion, occultism and mystic experience is disrupted, and there is a tendency, not by any means universal or complete but still pronounced or visible, for each of these powers to follow its own way to its own goal in its own separate and free character. A complete denial of religion, occultism and all that is supraphysical is the last outcome of this stage, a hard dry paroxysm of the superficial intellect hacking away the sheltering structures that are refuges for the deeper parts of our nature. But still evolutionary Nature keeps alive her ulterior intentions in the minds of a few and uses man's greater mental evolution to raise them to a higher plane and deeper issues. In the present time itself, after an age of triumphant intellectuality and materialism, we can see evidences of this natural process,—a return towards inner self-discovery, an inner seeking and thinking, a new attempt at mystic experience, a groping after the inner self,

a reawakening to some sense of the truth and power of the spirit begins to manifest itself; man's search after his self and soul and a deeper truth of things tends to revive and resume its lost force and to give a fresh life to the old creeds, erect new faiths or develop independently of sectarian religions. The intellect itself, having reached near to the natural limits of the capacity of physical discovery, having touched its bed-rock and found that it explains nothing more than the outer process of Nature, has begun, still tentatively and hesitatingly, to direct an eye of research on the deeper secrets of the mind and the life force and on the domain of the occult which it had rejected *a priori*, in order to know what there may be in it that is true. Religion itself has shown its power of survival and is undergoing an evolution the final sense of which is still obscure. In this new phase of the mind that we see beginning, however crudely and hesitatingly, there can be detected the possibility of a pressure towards some decisive turn and advance of the spiritual evolution in Nature. Religion, rich but with a certain obscurity in her first infrarational stage, had tended under the overweight of the intellect to pass into a clear but bare rational interspace; but it must in the end follow the upward curve of the human mind and rise more fully at its summits towards its true or greatest field in the sphere of a suprarational consciousness and knowledge.

ANCIENT INDIAN SCIENCE

To say that Indian philosophy has led away from the study of nature, is to state an unfact and to ignore the history of Indian civilisation. If by nature is meant physical Nature, the plain truth is that no nation before the modern epoch carried scientific research so far and with such success as India

of ancient times. That is a truth which lies on the face of history for all to read; it has been brought forward with great force and much wealth of detail by Indian scholars and scientists of high eminence, but it was known already to European savants who had taken the trouble to make a comparative study. Not only was India in the first rank in mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, surgery, all the branches of physical knowledge which were practised in ancient times, but she was, along with the Greeks, the teacher of the Arabs from whom Europe recovered the lost habit of scientific enquiry and got the basis from which modern science started. In many directions India had the priority of discovery, to take only two examples, the decimal notation in mathematics, the perception that the earth is a moving body in astronomy,—*calā pṛthvī sthirā bhāti*, the earth moves and only appears to be still, said the Indian astronomer many centuries before Galileo. This great development would hardly have been possible in a nation whose thinkers and men of learning were led by its metaphysical tendencies to turn away from the study of nature. Moreover, a remarkable feature of the Indian mind was a great attention to the things of life, a disposition to observe minutely its salient facts, to systematise and so found in each department of it a science, scheme and rule. That is at least a good beginning of the scientific tendency and not the sign of a culture capable only of unsubstantial metaphysics.

It is perfectly true that Indian science came abruptly to a halt somewhere about the thirteenth century and a period of darkness and inactivity set in, which prevented it from proceeding to or sharing in the greater development of modern science. But this was not due to any increase or intolerance of the metaphysical tendency calling the national mind away

from physical nature: it was part of a general cessation of new intellectual activity, for philosophy too ceased to develop almost at the same time; the last great original attempts at spiritual philosophy are dated only a century later than the names of the last great original scientists. It is true also that Indian metaphysics did not, as modern philosophy has attempted, read the truth of being principally by the light of the truths of physical Nature; it founded itself rather upon psychology and psychic science, India's special strength,—but study of mind too is surely study of nature,—in which her success was greater than in physical knowledge. This she could not but do, since it was the spiritual truth of being for which she was seeking; nor is any really great and enduring philosophy possible except on this basis. It is true also that the harmony she established in her culture between philosophical truth and truth of psychology and religion was not extended in the same degree to the truth of physical being; physical Science had not then arrived at the great universal generalisations which would have made and are now making that synthesis possible. Nevertheless it is to be noted that from the beginning, from as early as the thought of the Vedas, the Indian mind had recognized that the same general laws and powers hold in spiritual, psychical and physical being; it discovered the omnipresence of life, affirmed the evolution of the soul in Nature from the vegetable and the animal to the human form, stated on the basis of philosophic intuition and spiritual and psychological experience many of the truths which modern knowledge is reaffirming from the other side as it passes from the study of physical nature to the study of life and mind. These things too were certainly not the results of a barren and empty metaphysics.

THE THREE ESSENTIAL MODES OF NATURE

The idea of the three essential modes is a creation of the ancient Indian thinkers and was the result of a long and profound psychological experience. Without experience and self-observation it is difficult to grasp accurately; but certain broad indications can be given which may help the sadhaka of the Way of Works to understand and analyse practically the combinations of his own nature. The names given to these modes in the Indian books are, respectively, *sattwaguna*, *rajo-guna* and *tamoguna*, the quality of good and light, the quality of passion and action, the quality of inertia and darkness. Though ordinarily used for psychological analysis these distinctions are valid also in physical nature; for all things in Nature are said to contain them and to be in process and form the result of their interaction.

Psychologically we must regard every form of things, whether animate or inanimate, as a poise of natural forces subject to envioning contacts from other combinations of forces that surround it. Our own separate being, our nature as distinguished from the soul, is nothing else but such a poise and combination. In the reception of the envioning contacts three modes are possible to the subject. First of all, it may suffer them inertly without any responsive reaction, any motion of self-defence, any capacity of adjustment or assimilation; this is the mode of *tamas* or inertia; its effect, if uncorrected by other elements, can be nothing but disintegration of the form or the nature without any new creation or new equilibrium; and at the heart of this impotence is a principle of ignorance, of obscurity, of inability to comprehend, seize and manage the experience.

On the other hand, the subject may react; it may strive, resist, attempt to dominate or engross the contacts of its environment. This is the mode of rajas or action and passion; its effect is struggle and change and new creation, victory and defeat, joy and suffering, hope and disappointment; its nature is an imperfect or wrong knowledge which brings with it effort, error, misadjustment, desire and grief. But also the subject may receive the impact with comprehension, with self-poise, with the power to assimilate because it understands, sympathises, responds, but is not overpowered. This is the mode of sattwa or light and good; its effect is happiness and harmony; its nature is a clearness of knowledge which is akin to sympathy and love. In inanimate Nature these modes work mechanically without any manifestation of their innate psychological results, as inertia and disintegration, as force and reaction and creation and as poise, status, adaptation, harmony and conservation. In the mental being they reveal their psychological values.

No natural existence is cast entirely in the single mould of any one of these qualities; the three are always present in each being in a constant combining of shifting relations and even, in a way, of mutual struggle to dominate each other. Every one of us has his sattwic states of light, clearness, happiness, poise and sympathy with the environment, his rajasic moods of desire and passion and struggle, joy and sorrow, work and eager creation and reaction on the environment, his tamasic lapses of depression, ignorance, incapacity, obscurity, recoil from or dull submission to the environment. Not only is this always so, but each of us is sattwic in some directions of his energy or in some parts of his being, in others rajasic, in yet others tamasic. Only, according as one or other of the modes dominates in his general temperament and

type of mind and action, we can say that he is the sattwic, rajasic or tamasic man.

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Matter or body is in its nature predominantly tamasic, life and nervous force predominantly rajasic, mind predominantly sattwic. The mixture and uneven operation of the three modes in these three instruments acting upon each other leads to a confused, troubled and improper action which is now the normal condition of man. But there is another action possible, more truly right, normal and natural to the deepest relations of Purusha and Prakriti although supernatural to our present imperfect nature. Body should be a passive field and instrument; but capable of responding to every demand of force and of holding and supporting every variety and intensity of experience. The nervous and emotional being should be capable of tireless action and enjoyment of experience and relation, but self-possessed and self-poised, neither harried by desire and importunate impulses nor dulled by indolence and incapacity. Mind should be full of an essential light and peace, not a knowledge made up of mental constructions nor an ease that is dependent on release from the strenuousness of creative and active energy. All three should be the harmonised instruments of a higher force, bliss and knowledge possessing them from a source beyond themselves.

Such a condition would be the true equality and unification of the three modes of Prakriti in that perfect temper of being which belongs to the divine nature. There there is no inertia or obscurity; tamas is replaced by a divine repose, peace and tranquillity out of which is released as if from a supreme state of calm concentration the play of knowledge and action.

There is no desire, striving or troubled impulse of action, creation and possession; rajas is replaced by the self-possessed act of force which even in its greatest intensities does not shake the poise or stain the peace of the soul. There is no restriction of a mind-constructed and therefore insecure or else inactive light and ease; sattwa is replaced by a wide illumination and a profound bliss identical with the depth and infinite existence of the soul and embracing in its amplitudes both deepest repose and intensest action.

III

THE SYNTHESIS NEEDED

PHYSICAL SCIENCE AND HUMAN HAPPINESS AND PERFECTION

PREOCCUPATION with life and matter is at the beginning right and necessary because the first step that man has to take is to know and possess this physical existence as well as he can by applying his thought and intelligence to such experience of it as his sense-mind can give to him; but this is only a preliminary step and, if we stop there, we have made no real progress: we are where we were and have gained only more physical elbow-room to move about in and more power for our mind to establish a relative knowledge and an insufficient and precarious mastery for our life-desire to push things about and jostle and hustle around amid the throng of physical forces and existences. The utmost widening of a physical objective knowledge, even if it embrace the most distant solar systems and the deepest layers of the earth and sea and the most subtle powers of material substance and energy, is not the essential gain for us, not the one thing which it is most needful for us to acquire. That is why the gospel of materialism, in spite of the dazzling triumphs of physical Science, proves itself always in the end a vain and helpless creed, and that too is why physical Science itself with all its achievements, though it may accomplish comfort, can never achieve happiness and fullness of being for the human race. Our true happiness lies in the true growth of our whole being,

in a victory throughout the total range of our existence, in mastery of the inner as well as and more than the outer, the hidden as well as the overt nature; our true completeness comes not by describing wider circles on the plane where we began, but by transcendence. It is for this reason that, after the first necessary foundation in life and matter, we have to heighten our force of consciousness, deepen, widen, subtilise it; we must first liberate our mental selves and enter into a freer, finer and nobler play of our mental existence: for the mental is much more than the physical our true existence, because we are even in our instrumental or expressive nature predominantly mind and not matter, mental much rather than physical beings. That growth into the full mental being is the first transitional movement towards human perfection and freedom; it does not actually perfect, it does not liberate the soul, but it lifts us one step out of the material and vital absorption and prepares the loosening of the hold of the Ignorance.

Our gain in becoming more perfect mental beings is that we get to the possibility of a subtler, higher and wider existence, consciousness, force, happiness and delight of being; in proportion as we rise in the scale of mind, a greater power of these things comes to us: our mental consciousness acquires for itself at the same time more vision and power and more subtlety and plasticity, and we are able to embrace more of the vital and physical existence itself, to know it better, to use it better, to give it nobler values, a broader range, a more sublimated action,—an extended scale, higher issues. Man is in his characteristic power of nature a mental being, but in the first steps of his emergence he is more of the mentalised animal, preoccupied like the animal with his bodily existence; he employs his mind for the uses, interests, desires of the

life and the body, as their servant and minister, not yet as their sovereign and master. It is as he grows in mind and in proportion as his mind asserts its selfhood and independence against the tyranny of life and matter, that he grows in stature. On one side, mind by its emancipation controls and illumines the life and physicality; on the other, the purely mental aims, occupations, pursuits of knowledge begin to get a value. The mind liberated from a lower control and preoccupation introduces into life a government, an uplifting, a refinement, a finer balance and harmony; the vital and physical movements are directed and put into order, transformed even as far as they can be by a mental agency; they are taught to be the instruments of reason and obedient to an enlightened will, an ethical perception and an aesthetic intelligence: the more this can be accomplished, the more the race becomes truly human, a race of mental beings.

It is this perception of life that was put in front by the Greek thinkers, and it is a vivid flowering in the sunlight of this ideal that imparts so great a fascination to Hellenic life and culture. In later times this perception was lost and, when it came back, it returned much diminished, mixed with more turbid elements: the perturbation of a spiritual ideal imperfectly grasped by the understanding and not at all realised in the life's practice but present with its positive and negative mental and moral influences, and over against it the pressure of a dominant, an inordinate vital urge which could not get its free self-satisfied movement, stood in the way of the sovereignty of the mind and the harmony of life, its realised beauty and balance. An opening to higher ideals, a greater range of life was gained, but the elements of a new idealism were only cast into its action as an influence, could not dominate and transform it and, finally, the spiritual

endeavour, thus ill-understood and unrealised, was thrown aside: its moral effects remained, but, deprived of the sustaining spiritual element, dwindled towards ineffectivity; the vital urge, assisted by an immense development of physical intelligence, became the preoccupation of the race. An imposing increase of a certain kind of knowledge and efficiency was the first result; the most recent outcome has been a perilous spiritual ill-health and a vast disorder.

For mind itself is not enough; even its largest play of intelligence creates only a qualified half-light. A surface mental knowledge of the physical universe is a still more imperfect guide; for the thinking animal it might be enough, but not for a race of mental beings in labour of a spiritual evolution. Even the truth of physical things cannot be entirely known, nor can the right use of our material existence be discovered by physical Science and an outward knowledge alone or made possible by the mastery of physical and mechanical processes alone: to know, to use rightly we must go beyond the truth of physical phenomenon and process, we must know what is within and behind it. For we are not merely embodied minds; there is a spiritual being, a spiritual principle, a spiritual plane of Nature. Into that we have to heighten our force of consciousness, to widen by that still more largely, even universally and infinitely, our range of being and our field of action, to take up by that our lower life and use it for greater ends and on a larger plan, in the light of the spiritual truth of existence. Our labour of mind and struggle of life cannot come to any solution until we have gone beyond the obsessing lead of an inferior Nature, integralised our natural being in the being and consciousness, learned to utilise our natural instruments by the force and for the joy of the Spirit. Then only can the constitutional

ignorance, the ignorance of the real build of our existence from which we suffer, change into a true and effective knowledge of our being and becoming. For what we are is spirit, —at present using mind predominantly, life and body subordinately, with matter for our original field but not our only field of experience; but this is only at present. Our imperfect mental instrumentation is not the last word of our possibilities; for there are in us, dormant or invisibly and imperfectly active, other principles beyond mind and closer to the spiritual nature, there are more direct powers and luminous instruments, there is a higher status, there are greater ranges of dynamic action than those that belong to our present physical, vital and mental existence. These can become our own status, part of our being, they can be principles, powers and instruments of our own enlarged nature. But for that it is not enough to be satisfied with a vague or an ecstatic ascent into spirit or a formless exaltation through the touch of its infinities; their principle has to evolve, as life has evolved, as mind has evolved, and organise its own instrumentation, its own satisfaction. Then we shall possess the true constitution of our being and we shall have conquered the Ignorance.

The conquest of our constitutional ignorance cannot be complete, cannot become integrally dynamic, if we have not conquered our psychological ignorance; for the two are bound up together. Our psychological ignorance consists in a limitation of our self-knowledge to that little wave or superficial stream of our being which is the conscient waking self. This part of our being is an original flux of formless or only half-formulated movements carried on in an automatic continuity, supported and held together by an active surface memory and a passive underlying consciousness in its flow

from moment to moment of time, organised and interpreted by our reason and our witnessing and participating intelligence. Behind it is an occult existence and energy of our secret being without which the superficial consciousness and activity could not have existed or acted. In Matter only an activity is manifest,—inconscious in the outside of things which is all we know; for the indwelling Consciousness in Matter is secret, subliminal, not manifested in the unconscious form and the involved energy: but in us consciousness has become partly manifest, partly awake. But this consciousness is hedged and imperfect; it is bound by its habitual self-limitation and moves in a restricted circle,—except when there are flashes, intimations or upsurgings from the secrecy within us which break the limits of the formation or flow beyond them or widen the circle. But these occasional visitations cannot enlarge us far beyond our present capacities, are not enough to revolutionise our status. That can only be done if we can bring into it the higher undeveloped lights and powers potential in our being and get them consciously and normally into play; for this we must be able to draw freely from those ranges of our being to which they are native but which are at present subconscious or rather secretly intraconscious and circumconscious or else superconscious to us. Or,—the yet more that is also possible,—we must enter into these inner and higher parts of ourselves by an inward plunge or disciplined penetration and bring back with us to the surface their secrets. Or, achieving a still more radical change of our consciousness, we must learn to live within and no longer on the surface and be and act from the inner depths and from a soul that has become sovereign over the nature.

EXTROVERSION, INTROVERSION AND SPIRITUAL
INNER LIVING

The movement of going inward and living inward is a difficult task to lay upon the normal consciousness of the human being; yet there is no other way of self-finding. The materialistic thinker, erecting an opposition between the extrovert and the introvert, holds up the extrovert attitude for acceptance as the only safety: to go inward is to enter into darkness or emptiness or to lose the balance of the consciousness and become morbid; it is from outside that such inner life as one can construct is created, and its health is assured only by a strict reliance on its wholesome and nourishing outer sources,—the balance of the personal mind and life can only be secured by a firm support on external reality, for the material world is the sole fundamental reality. This may be true for the physical man, the born extrovert, who feels himself to be a creature of outward Nature; made by her and dependent on her, he would lose himself if he went inward: for him there is no inner being, no inner living. But the introvert of this distinction also has not the inner life; he is not a seer of the true inner self and of inner things, but the small mental man who looks superficially inside himself and sees there not his spiritual self but his life-ego, his mind-ego and becomes unhealthily preoccupied with the movements of this little pitiful dwarf creature. The idea or experience of an inner darkness when looking inwards is the first reaction of a mentality which has lived always on the surface and has no realised inner existence; it has only a constructed internal experience which depends on the outside world for the materials of its being. But to those into whose composition there has entered the power of a more inner

living, the movement of going within and living within brings not a darkness or dull emptiness but an enlargement, a rush of new experience, a greater vision, a larger capacity, an extended life infinitely more real and various than the first pettiness of the life constructed for itself by our normal physical humanity, a joy of being which is larger and richer than any delight in existence that the outer vital man or the surface mental man can gain by their dynamic vital force and activity or subtlety and expansion of the mental existence.

NATURE AND SUPERNATURE

This is the whole sense and the inherent law and necessity of the passage from the purely mental and material being and life to the spiritual and supramental being and life, that the liberation, perfection, self-fulfilment for which the being in the Ignorance is seeking can only be reached by passing out of his present nature of Ignorance into a nature of spiritual self-knowledge and world-knowledge. This greater nature we speak of as Supernature because it is beyond his actual level of consciousness and capacity; but in fact it is his own true nature, the height and completeness of it, to which he must arrive if he is to find his real self and whole possibility of being. Whatever happens in Nature must be the result of Nature, the effectuation of what is implied or inherent in it, its inevitable fruit and consequence. If our nature is a fundamental Inconscience and Ignorance arriving with difficulty at an imperfect knowledge, an imperfect formulation of consciousness and being, the results in our being, life and action and creation must be, as they now are, a constant imperfection and insecure half result, an imperfect mentality, an imperfect life, an imperfect physical existence. We seek to construct

systems of knowledge and systems of life by which we can arrive at some perfection of our existence, some order of right relations, right use of mind, right use and happiness and beauty of life, right use of the body. But what we achieve is a constructed half-rightness mixed with much that is wrong and unlovely and unhappy; our successive constructions, because of the vice in them and because mind and life cannot rest permanently anywhere in their seeking, are exposed to destruction, decadence, disruption of their order, and we pass from them to others which are not more finally successful or enduring, even if on one side or another they may be richer and fuller or more rationally plausible. It cannot be otherwise, because we can construct nothing which goes beyond our nature; imperfect, we cannot construct perfection, however wonderful may seem to us the machinery our mental ingenuity invents, however externally effective. Ignorant, we cannot construct a system of entirely true and fruitful self-knowledge or world-knowledge: our science itself is a construction, a mass, of formulas and devices; masterful in knowledge of processes and in the creation of apt machinery, but ignorant of the foundations of our being and of world-being, it cannot perfect our nature and therefore cannot perfect our life.

Our nature, our consciousness is that of beings ignorant of each other, separated from each other, rooted in a divided ego, who must strive to establish some kind of relation between their embodied ignorances; for the urge to union and forces making for union are there in Nature. Individual and group harmonies of a comparative and qualified completeness are created, a social cohesion is accomplished; but in the mass the relations formed are constantly marred by imperfect sympathy, imperfect understanding, gross misunderstandings,

strife, discord, unhappiness. It cannot be otherwise so long as there is no true union of consciousness founded upon a nature of self-knowledge, inner mutual knowledge, inner realisation of unity, concord of our inner forces of being and inner forces of life. In our social building we labour to establish some approach to unity, mutuality, harmony, because without these things there can be no perfect social living; but what we build is a constructed unity, an association of interests and egos enforced by law and custom and imposing an artificial constructed order in which the interests of some prevail over the interests of others and only a half accepted half enforced, half natural half artificial accommodation keeps the social whole in being. Between community and community there is a still worse accommodation with a constant recurrence of the strife of collective ego with collective ego. This is the best that we can do and all our persistent readjustments of the social order can bring us nothing better than an imperfect structure of life.

It is only if our nature develops beyond itself, if it becomes a nature of self-knowledge, mutual understanding, unity, a nature of true being and true life that the result can be a perfection of ourselves and our existence, a life of true being, a life of unity, mutuality, harmony, a life of true happiness, a harmonious and beautiful life. If our nature is fixed in what it is, what it has already become, then no perfection, no real and enduring happiness is possible in earthly life; we must seek it not at all and do the best we can with our imperfections, or we must seek it elsewhere, in a supraterrrestrial hereafter, or we must go beyond all such seeking and transcend life by an extinction of nature and ego in some Absolute from which this strange and unsatisfactory being of ours has come into existence. But if in us there is a spiritual being which is emerging and our present state is only an imperfection or half-emergence, if the

Inconscient is a starting-point containing in itself the potency of a superconscience and supernature which has to evolve, a veil of apparent Nature in which that greater consciousness is concealed and from which it has to unfold itself, if an evolution of being is the law, then what we are seeking for is not only possible but part of the eventual necessity of things. It is our spiritual destiny to manifest and become that supernature,—for it is the nature of our true self, our still occult, because unevolved, whole being. A nature of unity will then bring inevitably its life-result of unity, mutuality, harmony. An inner life awakened to a full consciousness and to a full power of consciousness will bear its inevitable fruit in all who have it, self-knowledge, a perfected existence, the joy of a satisfied being, the happiness of a fulfilled nature.

EVOLUTIONARY CRISIS IN THE LIFE OF MANKIND

At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis in which is concealed a choice of its destiny; for a stage has been reached in which the human mind has achieved in certain directions an enormous development while in others it stands arrested and bewildered and can no longer find its way. A structure of the external life has been raised up by man's ever-active mind and life-will, a structure of an unmanageable hugeness and complexity, for the service of his mental, vital, physical claims and urges, a complex political, social, administrative, economic, cultural machinery, an organised collective means for his intellectual, sensational, aesthetic and material satisfaction. Man has created a system of civilisation which has become too big for his limited mental capacity and understanding and his still more limited spiritual and moral capacity to utilise and manage, a too dangerous servant of his blundering

ego and its appetites. For no greater seeing mind, no intuitive soul of knowledge has yet come to his surface of consciousness which could make this basic fullness of life a condition for the free growth of something that exceeded it. This new fullness of the means of life might be, by its power for a release from the incessant unsatisfied stress of his economic and physical needs, an opportunity for the full pursuit of other and greater aims surpassing the material existence, for the discovery of a higher truth and good and beauty, for the discovery of a greater and diviner spirit which would intervene and use life for a higher perfection of the being: but it is being used instead for the multiplication of new wants and an aggressive expansion of the collective ego. At the same time Science has put at his disposal many potencies of the universal Force and has made the life of humanity materially one; but what uses this universal Force is a little human individual or communal ego with nothing universal in its light of knowledge or its movements, no inner sense or power which would create in this physical drawing together of the human world a true life unity, a mental unity or a spiritual oneness. All that is there is a chaos of clashing mental ideas, urges of individual and collective physical want and need, vital claims and desires, impulses of an ignorant life-push, hungers and calls for life satisfaction of individuals, classes, nations, a rich fungus of political and social and economic nostrums and notions, a hustling medley of slogans and panaceas for which men are ready to oppress and be oppressed, to kill and be killed, to impose them somehow or other by the immense and too formidable means placed at his disposal, in the belief that this is his way out to something ideal. The evolution of human mind and life must necessarily lead towards an increasing universality; but on a basis of ego and segmenting and dividing.

mind this opening to the universal can only create a vast pullulation of unaccorded ideas and impulses, a surge of enormous powers and desires, a chaotic mass of unassimilated and intermixed mental, vital and physical material of a larger existence which, because it is not taken up by a creative harmonising light of the spirit, must welter in a universalised confusion and discord out of which it is impossible to build a greater harmonic life. Man has harmonised life in the past by organised ideation and limitation; he has created societies based on fixed ideas or fixed customs, a fixed cultural system or an organic life-system, each with its own order; the throwing of all these into the melting-pot of a more and more intermingling life and a pouring in of ever new ideas and motives and facts and possibilities call for a new, a greater consciousness to meet and master the increasing potentialities of existence and harmonise them. Reason and Science can only help by standardising, by fixing everything into an artificially arranged and mechanised unity of material life. A greater whole-being, whole-knowledge, whole-power is needed to weld 'all into a greater unity of whole-life.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

A rational and scientific formula of the vitalistic and materialistic human being and his life, a search for a perfected economic society and the democratic cultus of the average man are all that the modern mind presents us in this crisis as a light for its solution. Whatever the truth supporting these ideas, this is clearly not enough to meet the need of a humanity which is missioned to evolve beyond itself or, at any rate, if it is to live, must evolve far beyond anything that it at present is. A life-instinct in the race and in the average man himself has

felt the inadequacy and has been driving towards a reversal of values or a discovery of new values and a transfer of life to a new foundation. This has taken the form of an attempt to find a simple and ready-made basis of unity, mutuality, harmony for the common life, to enforce it by a suppression of the competitive clash of egos and so to arrive at a life of identity for the community in place of a life of difference. But to realise these desirable ends the means adopted have been the forcible and successful materialisation of a few restricted ideas or slogans enthroned to the exclusion of all other thought, the suppression of the mind of the individual, a mechanised compression of the elements of life, a mechanised unity and drive of the life-force, a coercion of man by the State, the substitution of the communal for the individual ego. The communal ego is idealised as the soul of the nation, the race, the community; but this is a colossal and may turn out to be a fatal error. A forced and imposed unanimity of mind, life, action raised to their highest tension under the drive of something which is thought to be greater, the collective soul, the collective life, is the formula found. But this obscure collective being is not the soul or self of the community; it is a life-force that rises from the subconscious and, if denied the light of guidance by the reason, can be driven only by dark massive forces which are powerful but dangerous for the race because they are alien to the conscious evolution of which man is the trustee and bearer. It is not in this direction that evolutionary Nature has pointed mankind; this is a reversion towards something that she had left behind her.

Another solution that is attempted reposes still on the materialistic reason and a unified organisation of the economic life of the race; but the method that is being employed is the same, a forced compression and imposed unanimity of mind

and life and a mechanical organisation of the communal existence. A unanimity of this kind can only be maintained by a compression of all freedom of thought and life, and that must bring about either the efficient stability of a termite civilisation or a drying up of the springs of life and a swift or slow decadence. It is through the growth of consciousness that the collective soul and its life can become aware of itself and develop; the free play of mind and life is essential for the growth of consciousness: for mind and life are the soul's only instrumentation until a higher instrumentation develops; they must not be inhibited in their action or rendered rigid, unplastic and unprogressive. The difficulties or disorders engendered by the growth of the individual mind and life cannot be healthily removed by the suppression of the individual; the true cure can only be achieved by his progression to a greater consciousness in which he is fulfilled and perfected.

An alternative solution is the development of an enlightened reason and will of the normal man consenting to a new socialised life in which he will subordinate his ego for the sake of the right arrangement of the life of the community. If we inquire how this radical change is to be brought about, two agencies seem to be suggested, the agency of a greater and better mental knowledge, right ideas, right information, right training of the social and civic individual and the agency of a new social machinery which will solve everything by the magic of the social machine cutting humanity into a better pattern. But it has not been found in experience, whatever might have once been hoped, that education and intellectual training by itself can change man; it only provides the human individual and collective ego with better information and a more efficient machinery for its self-affirmation, but leaves it the same unchanged human ego. Nor can human mind

and life be cut into perfection—even into what is thought to be perfection, a constructed substitute,—by any kind of social machinery; matter can be so cut, thought can be so cut, but in our human existence matter and thought are only instruments for the soul and the life-force. Machinery cannot form the soul and life-force into standardised shapes; it can at best coerce them, make soul and mind inert and stationary and regulate the life's outward action; but if this is to be effectively done, coercion and compression of the mind and life are indispensable and that again spells either unprogressive stability or decadence. The reasoning mind with its logical practicality has no other way of getting the better of Nature's ambiguous and complex movements than a regulation and mechanisation of mind and life. If that is done, the soul of humanity will either have to recover its freedom and growth by a revolt and a destruction of the machine into whose grip it has been cast or escape by a withdrawal into itself and a rejection of life. Man's true way out is to discover his soul and its self-force and instrumentation and replace by it both the mechanisation of mind and the ignorance and disorder of life-nature. But there would be little room and freedom for such a movement of self-discovery and self-effectuation in a closely regulated and mechanised social existence.

There is the possibility that in the swing back from a mechanistic idea of life and society the human mind may seek refuge in a return to the religious idea and a society governed or sanctioned by religion. But organised religion, though it can provide a means of inner uplift for the individual and preserve in it or behind it a way for his opening to spiritual experience, has not changed human life and society; it could not do so because, in governing society, it had to compromise with the lower parts of life and could not insist on the

inner change of the whole being; it could insist only on a credal adherence, a formal acceptance of its ethical standards and a conformity to institution, ceremony and ritual. Religion so conceived can give a religio-ethical colour or surface tinge, —sometimes, if it maintains a strong kernel of inner experience, it can generalise to some extent an incomplete spiritual tendency; but it does not transform the race, it cannot create a new principle of the human existence. A total spiritual direction given to the whole life and the whole nature can alone lift humanity beyond itself. Another possible conception akin to the religious solution is the guidance of society by men of spiritual attainment, the brotherhood or unity of all in the faith or in the discipline, the spiritualisation of life and society by the taking up of the old machinery of life into such a unification or inventing a new machinery. This too has been attempted before without success; it was the original founding idea of more than one religion: but the human ego and vital nature were too strong for a religious idea working on the mind and by the mind to overcome its resistance. It is only the full emergence of the soul, the full descent of the native light and power of the Spirit and the consequent replacement or transformation and uplifting of our insufficient mental and vital nature by a spiritual and supramental supernature that can effect this evolutionary miracle.

At first sight this insistence on a radical change of nature might seem to put off all the hope of humanity to a distant evolutionary future; for the transcendence of our normal human nature, a transcendence of our mental, vital and physical being, has the appearance of an endeavour too high and difficult and at present, for man as he is, impossible. Even if it were so, it would still remain the sole possibility for the transmutation of life; for to hope for a true change of human

life without a change of human nature is an irrational and unspiritual proposition; it is to ask for something unnatural and unreal, an impossible miracle. But what is demanded by this change is not something altogether distant, alien to our existence and radically impossible; for what has to be developed is there in our being and not something outside it: what evolutionary Nature presses for, is an awakening to the knowledge of self, the discovery of self, the manifestation of the self and spirit within us and the release of its self-knowledge, its self-power, its native self-instrumentation. It is, besides, a step for which the whole of evolution has been a preparation and which is brought closer at each crisis of human destiny when the mental and vital evolution of the being touches a point where intellect and vital force reach some acme of tension and there is a need either for them to collapse, to sink back into a torpor of defeat or a repose of unprogressive quiescence or to rend their way through the veil against which they are straining. What is necessary is that there should be a turn in humanity felt by some or many towards the vision of this change, a feeling of its imperative need, the sense of its possibility, the will to make it possible in themselves and to find the way. That trend is not absent and it must increase with the tension of the crisis in human world-destiny; the need of an escape or a solution, the feeling that there is no other solution than the spiritual cannot but grow and become more imperative under the urgency of critical circumstance.

INTELLECT AND REASON IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE SPIRIT

In any total advance or evolution of the spirit, not only the

intuition, insight, inner sense, the heart's devotion, a deep and direct life-experience of the things of the spirit have to be developed, but the intellect also must be enlightened and satisfied; our thinking and reflecting mind must be helped to understand, to form a reasoned and systematised idea of the goal, the method, the principles of this highest development and activity of our nature and the truth of all that lies behind it. Spiritual realisation and experience, an intuitive and direct knowledge, a growth of inner consciousness, a growth of the soul and of an intimate soul perception, soul vision and a soul sense, are indeed the proper means of this evolution: but the support of the reflective and critical reason is also of great importance; if many can dispense with it, because they have a vivid and direct contact with inner realities and are satisfied with experience and insight, yet in the whole movement it is indispensable. If the supreme truth is a spiritual Reality, then the intellect of man needs to know what is the nature of that original Truth and the principle of its relations to the rest of existence, to ourselves and the universe. The intellect is not capable by itself of bringing us into touch with the concrete spiritual reality, but it can help by a mental formulation of the truth of the Spirit which explains it to the mind and can be applied even in the more direct seeking: this help is of a capital importance.

Our thinking mind is concerned mainly with the statement of general spiritual truth, the logic of its absolute and the logic of its relativities, how they stand to each other or lead to each other, and what are the mental consequences of the spiritual theorem of existence. But besides this understanding and intellectual statement which is its principal right and share, the intellect seeks to exercise a critical control; it may admit the ecstatic or other concrete spiritual experiences,

but its demand is to know on what sure and well-ordered truths of being they are founded. Indeed, without such a truth known and verifiable, our reason might find these experiences insecure and unintelligible, might draw back from them as possibly not founded on truth or else distrust them in their form, if not in their foundation, as affected by an error, even an aberration of the imaginative vital mind, the emotions, the nerves or the senses; for these might be misled, in their passage or transference from the physical and sensible to the invisible, into a pursuit of deceiving lights or at least to a misreception of things valid in themselves but marred by a wrong or imperfect interpretation of what is experienced or a confusion and disorder of the true spiritual values. If reason finds itself obliged to admit the dynamics of occultism, there too it will be most concerned with the truth and right system and real significance of the forces that it sees brought into play; it must inquire whether the significance is that which the occultist attaches to it or something other and perhaps deeper which has been misinterpreted in its essential relations and values or not given its true place in the whole of experience. For the action of our intellect is primarily the function of understanding, but secondarily critical and finally organising, controlling and formative.

“SCIENTIFICALLY SPEAKING”

When the scientist says that “scientifically speaking, God is a hypothesis which is no longer necessary” he is talking arrant nonsense—for the existence of God is not and cannot be and never was a scientific hypothesis or problem at all, it is and always has been a spiritual or a metaphysical problem. You cannot speak scientifically about it at all either pro or

con. The metaphysician or the spiritual seeker has a right to point out that it is nonsense; but if you lay down the law to the scientist in the field of science you run the risk of having the same objection turned against you.

As to the unity of all knowledge, that is a thing *in posse*, not yet *in esse*. The mechanical method of knowledge leads to certain results, the higher method leads to certain others, and they at many points fundamentally disagree. How is the difference to be bridged? For each seems valid in its own field; it is a problem to be solved, but you cannot solve it in the way you propose, least of all in the field of physics. In psychology one can say that the mechanical or physiological approach takes hold of the thing by the blind end and is the least fruitful of all—for psychology is not primarily a thing of mechanism and measure, it opens to a vast field beyond the physical instrumentalities of the body-consciousness. In biology one can get a glimpse of something beyond mechanism, because there is from the beginning a stir of consciousness progressing and organising itself more and more for self-expression. But in physics you are in the very domain of the mechanical law where process is everything and the driving consciousness has chosen to conceal itself with the greatest thoroughness—so that, “scientifically speaking”, it does not exist there. One can discover it there by occultism and Yoga, but the methods of occult science and of Yoga are not measurable or followable by the means of physical science—so the gulf remains in existence. It may be bridged one day, but the physicist is not likely to be the bridge-builder, so it is no use asking him to try what is beyond his province.

THE HIGHER AND THE LOWER KNOWLEDGE

There are two kinds of knowledge, that which seeks to understand the apparent phenomenon of existence externally, by an approach from outside, through the intellect,—this is the lower knowledge, the knowledge of the apparent world; secondly, the knowledge which seeks to know the truth of existence from within, in its source and reality, by spiritual realisation. Ordinarily, a sharp distinction is drawn between the two, and it is supposed that when we get to the higher knowledge, the God-knowledge, then the rest, the world-knowledge, becomes of no concern to us: but in reality they are two sides of one seeking. All knowledge is ultimately the knowledge of God, through himself, through Nature, through her works. Mankind has first to seek this knowledge through the external life; for until its mentality is sufficiently developed, spiritual knowledge is not really possible, and in proportion as it is developed, the possibilities of spiritual knowledge become richer and fuller.

Science, art, philosophy, ethics, psychology, the knowledge of man and his past, action itself are means by which we arrive at the knowledge of the workings of God through Nature and through life. At first it is the workings of life and forms of Nature which occupy us, but as we go deeper and deeper and get a completer view and experience, each of these lines brings us face to face with God. Science at its limits, even physical Science, is compelled to perceive in the end the infinite, the universal, the spirit, the divine intelligence and will in the material universe. Still more easily must this be the end with the psychic sciences which deal with the operations of higher and subtler planes and powers of our being and come into contact with the beings

and the phenomena of the worlds behind which are unseen, not sensible by our physical organs, but ascertainable by the subtle mind and senses. Art leads to the same end; the aesthetic human being intensely preoccupied with Nature through aesthetic emotion must in the end arrive at spiritual emotion and perceive not only the infinite life, but the infinite presence within her; preoccupied with beauty in the life of man he must in the end come to see the divine, the universal, the spiritual in humanity. Philosophy dealing with the principles of things must come to perceive the Principle of all these principles and investigate its nature, attributes and essential workings. So ethics must eventually perceive that the law of good which it seeks is the law of God and depends on the being and nature of the Master of the law. Psychology leads from the study of mind and the soul in living beings to the perception of the one soul and one mind in all things and beings. The history and study of man like the history and study of Nature lead towards the perception of the eternal and universal Power and Being whose thought and will work out through the cosmic and human evolution. Action itself forces us into contact with the divine Power which works through, uses, overrules our actions. The intellect begins to perceive and understand, the emotions to feel and desire and revere, the will to turn itself to the service of the Divine without whom Nature and man cannot exist or move and by conscious knowledge of whom alone we can arrive at our highest possibilities.

THE MOST VITAL ISSUE OF THE AGE

The present era of the world is a stage of immense transformations. Not one but many radical ideas are at work in the

mind of humanity and agitate its life with a vehement seeking and effort at change; and although the centre of the agitation is in progressive Europe, yet the East is being rapidly drawn into this churning of the sea of thought and this breaking up of old ideas and old institutions. No nation or community can any longer remain psychologically cloistered and apart in the unity of the modern world. It may even be said that the future of humanity depends most upon the answer that will be given to the modern riddle of the Sphinx by the East and especially by India, the hoary guardian of the Asiatic idea and its profound spiritual secrets. For the most vital issue of the age is whether the future progress of humanity is to be governed by the modern economic and materialistic mind of the West or by a nobler pragmatism guided, uplifted and enlightened by spiritual culture and knowledge. The West never really succeeded in spiritualising itself and latterly it has been habituated almost exclusively to an action in the external governed by political and economic ideas and necessities; in spite of the reawakening of the religious mind and the growth of a widespread but not yet profound or luminous spiritual and psychical curiosity and seeking, it has to act solely in the things of this world and to solve its problems by mechanical methods and as the thinking political and economic animal, simply because it knows no other stand-point and is accustomed to no other method. On the other hand the East, though it has allowed its spirituality to slumber too much in dead forms, has always been open to profound awakenings and preserves its spiritual capacity intact, even when it is actually inert and uncreative. Therefore the hope of the world lies in the re-arousing in the East of the old spiritual practicality and large and profound vision and power of organisation under the insistent contact of the

West and in the flooding out of the light of Asia on the Occident, no longer in forms that are now static, effete, unadaptive, but in new forms stirred, dynamic and effective.

THE INDIAN SPIRIT

Its real key-note is the tendency of spiritual realisation, not cast at all into any white monotone, but many-facetted, many-coloured, as supple in its adaptability as it is intense in its highest pitches. The note of spirituality is dominant, initial, constant, always recurrent; it is the support of all the rest. The first age of India's greatness was a spiritual age when she sought passionately for the truth of existence through the intuitive mind and through an inner experience and interpretation both of the psychic and the physical existence. The stamp put on her by that beginning she has never lost, but rather always enriched it with fresh spiritual experience and discovery at each step of the national life. Even in her hour of decline it was the one thing she could never lose.

But this spiritual tendency does not shoot upward only to the abstract, the hidden and the intangible; it casts its rays downward and outward to embrace the multiplicities of thought and the richness of life. Therefore the second long epoch of India's greatness was an age of the intellect, the ethical sense, the dynamic will in action enlightened to formulate and govern life in the lustre of spiritual truth. After the age of the Spirit, the age of the Dharma; after the Veda and Upanishads, the heroic centuries of action and social formation, typical construction and thought and philosophy, when the outward forms of Indian life and culture were fixed in their large lines and even their later developments were being determined in the seed. The great classical age of Sans-

krit culture was the flowering of this intellectuality into curiosity of detail in the refinements of scholarship, science, art, literature, politics, sociology, mundane life. We see at this time too the sounding not only of aesthetic, but of emotional and sensuous, even of vital and sensual experience. But the old spirituality reigned behind all this mental and all this vital activity, and its later period, the post-classical, saw a lifting up of the whole lower life and an impressing upon it of the values of the spirit. This was the sense of the Puranic and Tantric systems and the religions of Bhakti. Later Vaishnavism, the last fine flower of the Indian spirit, was in its essence the taking up of the aesthetic, emotional and sensuous being into the service of the spiritual. It completed the curve of the cycle.

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Indian renaissance is arising, and that must determine its future tendency. The recovery of the old spiritual knowledge and experience in all its splendour, depth and fullness is its first, most essential work; the flowing of this spirituality into new forms of philosophy, literature, art, science and critical knowledge is the second; an original dealing with modern problems in the light of Indian spirit and the endeavour to formulate a greater synthesis of a spiritualised society is the third and most difficult. Its success on these three lines will be the measure of its help to the future of humanity.

THE SPIRITUAL AND THE MATERIAL-MENTAL VIEWPOINTS

The spiritual view holds that the mind, life, body are man's means and not his aims and even that they are not his last

and highest means; it sees them as his outer instrumental self and not his whole being. It sees the infinite behind all things finite and it adjudges the value of the finite by higher infinite values of which they are the imperfect translation and towards which, to a truer expression of them, they are always trying to arrive. It sees a greater reality than the apparent not only behind man and the world, but within man and the world, and this soul, self, divine thing in man it holds to be that in him which is of the highest importance, that which everything else in him must try in whatever way to bring out and express, and this soul, self, divine presence in the world it holds to be that which man has ever to try to see and recognise through all appearances, to unite his thought and life with it and in it to find his unity with his fellows. This alters necessarily our whole normal view of things; even in preserving all the aims of human life, it will give them a different sense and direction.

We aim at the health and vigour of the body; but with what object? For its own sake, will be the ordinary reply, because it is worth having; or else that we may have long life and a sound basis for our intellectual, vital, emotional satisfactions. Yes, for its own sake, in a way, but in this sense that the physical too is an expression of the spirit and its perfection is worth having, is part of the dharma of the complete human living; but still more as a basis for all that higher activity which ends in the discovery and expression of the divine self in man. *śarīraṁ khalu dharmasādhanaṁ*, runs the old Sanskrit saying, the body too is our means for fulfilling the dharma, the Godward law of our being. The mental, the emotional, the aesthetic parts of us have to be developed, is the ordinary view, so that they may have a greater satisfaction or because that is man's finer nature,

because so he feels himself more alive and fulfilled. This, but not this only; rather because these things too are the expressions of the spirit, things which are seeking in him for their divine values and by their growth, subtlety, flexibility, power, intensity he is able to come nearer to the divine Reality in the world, to lay hold on it variously, to tune eventually his whole life into unity and conformity with it. Morality is in the ordinary view a well-regulated individual and social conduct which keeps society going and leads towards a better, a more rational temperate, sympathetic, self-restrained dealing with our fellows. But ethics in the spiritual point of view is much more, it is a means of developing in our action and still more essentially in the character of our being the diviner self in us, a step of our growing into the nature of the Godhead.

So with all our aims and activities; spirituality takes them all and gives them a greater, diviner, more intimate sense. Philosophy is in the western way of dealing with it a dispassionate enquiry by the light of the reason into the first truths of existence, which we shall get at either by observing the facts science places at our disposal or by a careful dialectical scrutiny of the concepts of the reason or a mixture of the two methods. But from the spiritual view-point truth of existence is to be found by intuition and inner experience and not only by the reason and by scientific observation; the work of philosophy is to arrange the data given by the various means of knowledge, excluding none, and put them into their synthetic relation to the one Truth, the one supreme and universal reality. Eventually, its real value is to prepare a basis for spiritual realisation and the growing of the human being into his divine nature. Science itself becomes only a knowledge of the world which throws an added light on the spirit of the universe and his way in things. Nor will it confine itself

to a physical knowledge and its practical fruits or to the knowledge of life and man and mind based upon the idea of matter or material energy as our starting-point; a spiritualised culture will make room for new fields of research, for new and old psychical sciences and results which start from spirit as the first truth and from the power of mind and of what is greater than mind to act upon life and matter. The primitive aim of art and poetry is to create images of man and Nature which shall satisfy the sense of beauty and embody artistically the ideas of the intelligence about life and the responses of the imagination to it; but in a spiritual culture they become too in their aim a revelation of greater things concealed in man and Nature and of the deepest spiritual and universal beauty. Politics, society, economy are in the first form of human life simply an arrangement by which men collectively can live, produce, satisfy their desires, enjoy, progress in bodily, vital and mental efficiency; but the spiritual aim makes them much more than this, first, a framework of life within which man can seek for and grow into his real self and divinity, secondly, an increasing embodiment of the divine law of being in life, thirdly, a collective advance towards the light, power, peace, unity, harmony of the diviner nature of humanity which the race is trying to evolve. This and nothing more but nothing less, this in all its potentialities, is what we mean by a spiritual culture and the application of spirituality to life.

EUROPE AND INDIA

We have both made mistakes, faltered in the true application of our ideals, been misled into unhealthy exaggerations. Europe has understood the lesson, she is striving to correct herself; but she does not for this reason forswear science,

democracy, progress, but purposes to complete and perfect them, to use them better, to give them a sounder direction. She is admitting the light of the East, but on the basis of her own way of thinking and living, opening herself to truth of the spirit, but not abandoning her own truth of life and science and social ideals. We should be as faithful, as free in our dealings with the Indian spirit and modern influences; correct what went wrong with us; apply our spirituality on broader and freer lines, be if possible not less but more spiritual than were our forefathers; admit western science, reason, progressiveness, the essential modern ideas, but on the basis of our own way of life and assimilated to our spiritual aim and ideal; open ourselves to the throb of life, the pragmatic activity, the great modern endeavour, but not therefore abandon our fundamental view of God and man and Nature. There is no real quarrel between them; for rather these two things need each other to fill themselves in, to discover all their own implications, to awaken to their own richest and completest significances.

IV

WORDS OF THE MOTHER

A 'PRAYER AND MEDITATION'

THE greatest enemy of a silent contemplation turned towards Thee is certainly this constant subconscient registering of the multitude of phenomena with which we are put into contact. So long as we are occupied with cerebral activity, our conscious thought veils for us this excessive activity of our subconscient reception of things; quite a portion of our sensibility, and not perhaps the smallest, plays the role of a cinematographic apparatus without our knowledge and indeed to our detriment. It is only when we silence our active thought, which is comparatively easy to do, that we find surging from all sides the multitude of little subconscient notations which often drown us in their overflowing stream. This is why it happens, as soon as we try to enter into the silence of deep contemplation, that we are assailed by innumerable thoughts—if thoughts they can be called—which do not in the least interest us, do not represent for us any action of desire, any conscious attachment, but which only prove to us our inability to control the receptivity, we might say, mechanical, of our subconscient. A considerable labour is needed to silence all these useless noises, to stop this tiresome succession of images, to purify our minds from these thousand little cumbersome and valueless nullities. And it means so much time unprofitably lost, a terrible waste.

What is the remedy? In their simplistic way, some ascetic disciplines preconize solitude and inaction: to shelter the subconscious from all possibility of any registration; this appears to me a child's remedy, for it leaves the ascetic at the mercy of the first surprise; and when he thinks he is perfectly master of himself, if one day, he wishes to come back among his fellows to help them, his subconscious so long deprived of its receptive activity, is sure to abandon itself to it with an intensity greater than ever as soon as it gets the smallest opportunity.

There is certainly another remedy. Which? Undoubtedly we must learn how to control our subconscious as we control our conscious thought. The means for arriving at that are numerous. A regular introspection in the manner of the Buddhists and a systematic analysis of one's dreams—almost always constructed with this subconscious registration—form part of the method to be discovered. But there is certainly something more rapidly effective.....

O Lord, Eternal Master, it is Thou who wilt be the Teacher, the Inspirer; Thou who wilt teach me what I should do; so that I can, after an indispensable application to my own case, make others profit by what Thou wilt have taught me.

With a loving and confident devotion, I salute Thee.

Nov. 25, 1913

THE ORDINARY LIFE AND THE TRUE SOUL

The ordinary life is a round of various desires and greeds. As long as one is preoccupied with them, there can be no lasting progress. A way out of the round must be discovered. Take, as an instance, that commonest preoccupation of ordi-

nary life—the constant thinking by people of what they will eat and when they will eat and whether they are eating enough. To conquer the greed for food an equanimity in the being must be developed such that you are perfectly indifferent towards food. If food is given you, you eat it; if not, it does not worry you in the least; above all, you do not keep thinking about food. And the thinking must not be negative, either. To be absorbed in devising methods and means of abstinence as the *sannyāsīs* do is to be almost as preoccupied with food as to be absorbed in dreaming of it greedily. Have an attitude of indifference towards it: that is the main thing. Get the idea of food out of your consciousness, do not attach the slightest importance to it.

This will be very easy to do once you get into contact with your psychic being, the true soul deep within you. Then you will feel immediately how very unimportant these things are and that the sole thing that matters is the Divine. To dwell in the psychic is to be lifted above all greed. You will have no hankering, no worry, no feverish desire. And you will feel also that whatever happens, happens for the best. Do not misunderstand me to imply that you must always think that everything is for the best. Everything is not for the best so long as you are in the ordinary consciousness. You may be misled into utterly wrong channels when you are not in the right state of consciousness. But once you are poised in the psychic and have made your self-offering to the Divine, all that happens will happen for the best, for everything, however disguised, will be a definite divine response to you.

Indeed the very act of genuine self-giving is its own immediate reward—it brings with it such happiness, such confidence, such security as nothing else can give. But till the self-giving is firmly psychic there will be disturbances, the

interval of dark moments between bright ones. It is only the psychic that keeps on progressing in an unbroken line, its movement a continuous ascension. All other movements are broken and discontinuous. And it is not till the psychic is felt as yourself that you can be an individual even; for it is the true self in you. Before the true self is known, you are a public place, not a being. There are so many clashing forces working in you: hence, if you wish to make real progress, know your own being which is in constant union with the Divine and then alone will transformation be possible. All the other parts of your nature are ignorant: the mind, for instance, often commits the mistake of thinking that every brilliant idea is also a luminous idea. It can with equal vigour trump up arguments for and against God: it has no infallible sense of the truth. The vital is generally impressed by any show of power and is willing to see in it the Godlike. It is only the psychic which has a just discrimination: it is directly aware of the supreme Presence, it infallibly distinguishes between the divine and the undivine. If you have even for a moment contacted it, you will carry with you a conviction about the Divine which nothing will shake.

How, you ask me, are we to know our true being? Ask for it, aspire after it, want it as you want nothing else. Most of you here are influenced by it, but it should be more than an influence, you should be able to feel identified with it. All urge for perfection comes from it, but you are unaware of the source, you are not collaborating with it knowingly, you are not in identification with its light. Do not think I refer to the emotional part of you when I speak of the psychic. Emotion belongs to the higher vital, not to the pure psychic. The psychic is a steady flame that burns in you, soaring towards the Divine and carrying with it a sense of strength which

breaks down all oppositions. When you are identified with it you have the feeling of the divine truth—then you cannot help feeling also that the whole world is ignorantly walking on its head with its feet in the air!

You must learn to unite what you call your individual self with your true psychic individuality. Your present individuality is a very mixed thing, a series of changes which yet preserves a certain continuity, a certain sameness or identity of vibration in the midst of all flux. It is almost like a river which is never the same and yet has a certain definiteness and persistence of its own. Your normal self is merely a shadow of your true individuality which you will realise only when this normal individual which is differently poised at different times, now in the mental, then in the vital, at other times in the physical, gets into contact with the psychic and feels it as its real being. Then you will be one, nothing will shake or disturb you, you will make steady and lasting progress and be above such petty things as greed for food.

STEPPING BACK

Most of you live on the surface of your being, exposed to the touch of external influences. You live almost projected, as it were, outside your own body, and when you meet some unpleasant being similarly projected you get upset. The whole trouble arises out of your not being accustomed to stepping back. You must always step back into yourself—learn to go deep within—step back and you will be safe. Do not lend yourself to the superficial forces which move in the outside world. Even if you are in a hurry to do something, step back for a while and you will discover to your surprise how much sooner and with what greater success your work can be done.

If someone is angry with you, do not be caught in his vibrations but simply step back and his anger, finding no support or response, will vanish. Always keep your peace, resist all temptation to lose it. Never decide anything without stepping back, never speak a word without stepping back, never throw yourself into action without stepping back. All that belongs to the ordinary world is impermanent and fugitive, so there is nothing in it worth getting upset about. What is lasting, eternal, immortal and infinite—that indeed is worth having, worth conquering, worth possessing. It is divine Light, divine Love, divine Life—it is also Supreme Peace, Perfect Joy and all Mastery upon earth with the Complete Manifestation as the crowning. When you get the sense of the relativity of things, then whatever happens you can step back and look; you can remain quiet and call on the Divine Force and wait for an answer. Then you will know exactly what to do. Remember, therefore, that you cannot receive the answer before you are very peaceful. Practise that inner peace, make at least a small beginning and go on in your practice until it becomes a habit with you.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCIENTIST AND THE YOGI

The climax of the ordinary consciousness is Science. For Science, what is upon the earth is true, simply because it is there. What it calls Nature is for it the final reality, and its aim is to build up a theory to explain the workings of it. So it climbs as high as the physical mind can go and tries to find out the causes of what it assumes to be the true, the real world. But in fact it adapts “causes” to “effects”, for it has already taken that which is for the true, the real, and seeks only to explain it mentally. For the yogic consciousness,

however, this world is not the final reality. Rising above the mind into the Overmind and then into the Supermind, it enters the divine world of first truths, and looking down from there sees what has happened to those truths here. How distorted they have become, how completely falsified! So the so-called world of fact is for the Yogi a falsehood and not at all the only true reality. It is not what it ought to be, it is almost the very opposite; whereas for the scientist it is absolutely fundamental.

Our aim is to change things. The scientist says that whatever is, is natural and cannot be changed at heart. But really speaking, the laws of which he usually speaks are of his own mental making; and because he accepts Nature as it is as the very basis, things do not and cannot change for him in any complete sense. But, according to us, all this can be changed, because we know that there is something above, a divine truth seeking manifestation. There are no fixed laws here; even Science in its undogmatic moments recognises that the laws are mere mental constructions. There are only cases, and if the mind could apply itself to all the circumstances it would find that no two cases are similar. Laws are for the mind's convenience, but the process of the supramental manifestation is different, we may even say it is the reverse of the mind. In the supramental realisation, each thing will carry in itself a truth which will manifest at each instant without being bound by what has been or what will follow. That elaborate linking of the past with the present, which gives things in Nature such an air of unchangeable determinism is altogether the mind's way of conceiving, and is no proof that all that exists is inevitable and cannot be otherwise.

The knowledge possessed by the Yogi is also an answer to the terrible theory that all that takes place is God's direct

working. For once you rise to the Supermind you immediately perceive that the world is false and distorted. The supramental truth has not at all found manifestation. How then can the world be a genuine expression of the Divine? Only when the Supermind is established and rules here, then alone the Supreme Will may be said to have authentically manifested. At the same time, we must steer clear of the dangerous exaggeration of the sense of the falsehood of the world, which comes to those who have risen to the higher consciousness. What happened with Shankara and others like him was that they had a glimpse of the true consciousness, which threw the falsehood of this world into such sharp contrast that they declared the universe to be not only false but also a really non-existent illusion which should be entirely abandoned. We, on the other hand, see its falsehood, but realise also that it has to be replaced and not abandoned as an illusion. Only, the truth has got mistranslated, something has stepped in to pervert the divine reality, but the world is in fact meant to express it. And to express it is indeed our Yoga.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF SPACE AND TIME—FEARLESSNESS ON THE VITAL PLANE

Space and time do not begin and end with the mental consciousness: even the Overmind has them. They are the forms of all cosmic existence: only, they vary on each level. Each world has its own space and time.

Thus the mental space and time do not tally with what we observe here in the material universe. In the mind-world we can move forward and backward at our own will and pleasure. The moment you think of a person you are with

him; and no matter how near you may be to somebody, you can still be far away if your thoughts are occupied with someone else. The movement is immediate, so very free are the spatio-temporal conditions there. In the vital world, however, you have to use your will: there, too, distance is less rigid, but the movement is not immediate: the will has to be exercised.

The knowledge of different space-times can be of great practical value in Yoga. For, so many blunders are due to the inability to act in the right way when you are in your vital and mental bodies. In dreams, for instance, you must remember that you are in the space and time of the vital world and not try to act as if you were still in your physical body. If you have the necessary knowledge of the state of things there, you can deal much more effectively with those vital beings who terrify you and give you such unpleasant nightmares. One of the characteristics of activity in the vital space and time is that these beings are able to assume huge shapes at will and create the vibration of fear in you, which is their most powerful means of invading and possessing you. You must bear in mind their power of terrifying illusion, and cast out all fear. Once you face them boldly, unflinchingly, look them straight in the eyes, as it were, they lose three-quarters of their power. And if you call upon us for help, then even the last quarter is gone and they either take to their heels or dissolve. A friend of mine who used to go out in his vital body once complained that he was always being confronted with a gigantic tiger which made the night very wretched for him. I told him to banish all fear and walk straight up to the beast and stare it in the face, calling of course for assistance if necessary. He did so and lo! the tiger suddenly dwindled into an insignificant cat!

You have no idea of the almost magical effect of staring

fearlessly into the eyes of a vital being. Even on earth, if you deal in this way with all those incarnations of the vital powers which we ordinarily call animals, you are assured of easy mastery. A physical tiger will also flee from you, if, without the least tremor you look him straight in the eyes. A snake will never be able to bite you if you manage to rivet its gaze to yours without feeling the slightest dread. Merely staring at it with shaking knees will not help. There must be no disturbance in you: you must be calm and collected when you catch its gaze as it keeps swaying its head in order to fascinate you into abject fear. Animals are aware of a light in the human eyes which they are unable to bear if it is properly directed towards them. Man's look carries a power which nullifies them, provided it is steady and unafraid.

So, to sum up, remember two things: never, never be afraid, and in all circumstances call for the right help to make your strength a hundredfold stronger.

THE ATOMIC BOMB

The atomic bomb is in itself the most wonderful achievement and the sign of a growing power of man over the material nature. But what is to be regretted is that this material progress and mastery is not the result of and in keeping with a spiritual progress and mastery which alone has the power to contradict and counteract the terrible danger coming from these discoveries. We cannot and must not stop progress, but we must achieve it in an equilibrium between the inside and the outside.

APHORISTIC WORDS

Heroism is to be able to stand for the Truth in all circumstances, to declare it amidst opposition and to fight for it whenever necessary.

And to act always from one's highest consciousness.

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A smile acts upon difficulties as the sun upon the clouds—it disperses them.

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Peace and stillness are the great remedy for diseases. When we can bring peace in our cells we are cured.

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You can be entirely free from fear only when you have driven out of you all violence.

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To be concerned for one's happiness is the surest way of becoming unhappy.

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To conquer a desire brings more joy than to satisfy it.

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We are always surrounded by the things of which we think.

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It is only egoism that is shocked to find egoism in others.

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Doubt is not a sport to indulge in with impunity; it is a poison which drop by drop corrodes the soul.

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Our best friend is he who loves us in the best of ourselves and yet does not ask us to be other than we are.

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Give up yourself—it is the best way of finding yourself.

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When you are truly changed, everything around you will also be changed.

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Let us work as we pray, for indeed work is the body's best prayer to the Divine.

